

FREE
TRAVEL GUIDE

HIGH-COUNTRY CAMPING • COWBOY POETS

OKLAHOMA TODAY

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April
1990

Kiting
Takes
Off



Richard Dermer



OKLAHOMA TODAY

March-April 1990

Vol. 40, No. 2

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Oklahoma's big skies and buoyant winds are a perfect launching pad for the revival of an old sport. *By Sandi McDaniel, photographs by Christopher Weeks.*

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Photographer Jim Argo went to the highest point in Oklahoma; photographer David Fitzgerald went to the lowest. Highway 3, they found, links more than two points on a map.

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COVER: Kiting enthusiast Richard Dermer, Stillwater, prepares to launch a snowflake kite into the Oklahoma sky. Photograph by Christopher Weeks. **Inside front cover:** Jockey Jimmy Brooks rides "Becky's Alibi" back to the stables after winning third place in a race at Remington Park in OKC. The quarterhorse is owned by Becky L. Smith of Moore. Photograph by Steve Holman. **Back cover:** Spring on the prairie, outside Pawhuska in Osage County. Photograph by David and Jan Couch.



Today In Oklahoma

Have you heard of Tom? No, well, how about Kenton? Maybe. What both these communities have in common is that they are just barely in Oklahoma. Tom, sitting in the middle of the Ouachita National Forest at the southeastern tip, is just across the line from the bayous of Arkansas and Louisiana. Its residents have a Southern, down-home lifestyle. Kenton, a cowboy town at the western end of the Panhandle, is a stone's throw from the cactus and desert mesas of New Mexico.

About a year ago, Oklahoma City photographers Jim Argo and David Fitzgerald set off on a "wonderful adventure" to shoot photos of the state's highest and lowest points of elevation. Since Oklahoma tilts from northwest to southeast, Kenton and Tom were selected.

Both communities are isolated in rural areas. Perhaps that is why residents have retained their close family ties, strong religious values and interest in helping their neighbors.

When you view the Portfolio on page 14, you'll note the environments are completely different. In Kenton, you can see forever across the wide, open prairies; in Tom, your view is blocked by the forests and tightly grown foliage in all directions.

Argo and Fitzgerald added more than a thousand miles to their cars, camped out and enjoyed the hospitality of new-found friends.

"The only thing different from 50 years ago in those towns is satellite TV," Argo says. "It was great."

One of the newest members of the University of Oklahoma faculty has been in the headlines for years. Retired last fall as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William J. Crowe Jr. is now challenging students to understand international politics and issues.

And what a dramatic year to begin teaching geopolitics, with the fall of the Berlin wall and the many changes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. W.K. Stratton's story on Admiral Crowe begins on page 22.

For some, daffodils and pansies mark the beginning of spring; for other native Oklahomans it's digging wild onions and eating wild onions and eggs. Barbara Palmer writes on page 43 about the 38-year-old wild onion dinner, held annually in Bartlesville. Prepared and served by Indian women in their traditional dresses, the women represent 18 tribes. The dinner is served to the public to raise funds for scholarships for Indian college students while preserving part of their heritage.

Preserving another Western tradition—a long-kept secret—are today's cowboys. Yep, the cowboys are out of the closet. They've been writing poetry of all things. It's been going on forever, but nobody knew until the last couple years or so. Jeanne Devlin writes about cowboy poets and gatherings on page 36.

Kite flying has changed since the days of Mary Poppins, but it's still the universal sign of spring. Sandi McDaniel writes on page 9 about the latest trends and newest shapes of kites silhouetted against the state's blue skies.

Who were the first humans in North America and when did they arrive? Some folks plan their vacations digging up the answers. You can find out how to join them on page 28.

You will want to watch OETA's "Festival '90" on March 3-18. Highlight of this year's festival is the "Best of Austin City Limits", including its best performances for the past 10 years.

Get outside and enjoy Oklahoma this spring. There should be plenty of wind for kite flying and the wildflowers will be beautiful. —Sue Carter

OKLAHOMA TODAY

Henry Bellmon, Governor



*Published by the Oklahoma
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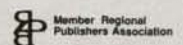
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Oklahoma Today (ISSN 0030-1892) is published bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September and November. Subscription prices: \$12/yr. in U.S.; \$16/yr. foreign.

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Printed at PennWell Printing, Tulsa.



Second-class postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK and additional entry offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Oklahoma Today Circulation, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.



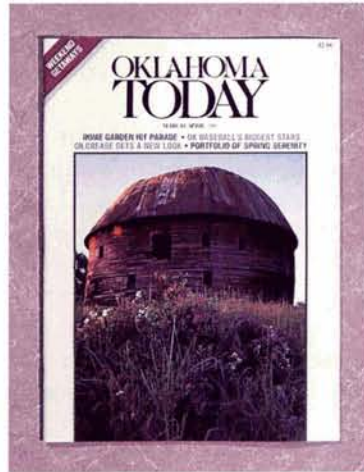
A Barn-Raising

The 91-year-old round red barn along old Route 66 throws a large shadow, not only across the highway curving through Arcadia (pop. approximately 300), but across the landscape of memory as well. When we ran a photo of the barn on the cover of *Oklahoma Today* (March-April 1988), we were bombarded with letters and phone calls asking about the well-being of the old barn.

By last summer, the barn looked like a lost cause. Spring rains had finally caved in the roof and difficulties in obtaining clear title to the barn made hopes of restoring and preserving the barn slim.

But thanks to a resourceful preservation board in Arcadia, the barn's future is now bright. Through donations, profits from the sales of "Save the Round Barn" souvenirs and community grants, the commission has raised \$20,000—enough for emergency repairs and some materials. In addition, a set of plans has been donated by Oklahoma State University Technical Branch and Oklahoma City resident Luke Robison has thrown in the general contracting.

The perennially optimistic society hopes not only to preserve



Arcadia's round barn later lost its roof.

the barn, but to restore it as a center of the community. (Its original owner held renowned barn dances there.) Final plans call for the barn to be used as a museum and a theater-in-the-round.

"People are fascinated by the barn," says board member Beverly White. "We are *not* going to let it get away from us."

For more information, write: Arcadia Historical and Preservation Society, Inc., P.O. Box 134, Arcadia, 73007, or call (405) 396-8380.

Living our history

The organizers of El Reno's Ft. Reno and Indian Territory Days work to make certain that all of their visitors' senses—sight, sound, smell, touch and even taste—will recall the 1880s. More than 500 living history reenactors help to create the illusion of a frontier fort on the plains, with three separate encampments: military, Plains Indians and settlers.

With the help of the reenactors, all volunteers who live and breathe history, "we're more believable than Hollywood," says Gary Foreman, a film producer and the 1989 director. The distinctly non-vintage Interstate 40 leading to El Reno proved to be more than helpful last year when 20,000 people showed up. "It was phenomenal," says 1990 director Jerry Murphy. It was the largest living history event west of the Mississippi—not bad for a first year.

A day devoted to students is planned for 1990. Don't come expecting a dry history lesson, though; events include stagecoach rides, sod-busting, Plains Indian war dances, a saloon (selling long-neck root beers), a melodrama and more.

For information about this Homecoming '90 event, set for April 27-29, call the El Reno Chamber of Commerce, at (405) 262-1188 or 1-800-248-FORT.

Tending to Old Man River

If one was charged with finding a low-key way to convert the average person into an environmental advocate, the solution couldn't be any more sweet:

Invite that person to contemplate the threat of litter and pollution while he paddles a scenic river on a spring day with the dogwoods in bloom.

That kind of logic fuels the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission and Northeastern State University's Canoe Extravaganza set for April 28 on 55-miles of the swift Illinois River.

"The Illinois is one of our six scenic rivers," says Ed Brocksmith of NSU. "This is a way to show as many people as we can what it's like and what they can do to help preserve it for future generations."

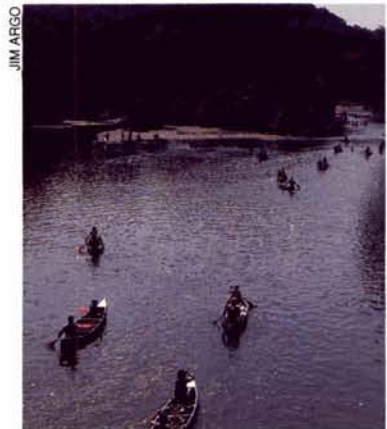
(Brocksmith intends to issue each canoe a bag to collect litter.)

The Extravaganza—a holistic takeoff of NSU's successful Great Canoe Race—will coincide with the national observance of Earth Day (April 22-29) and the Oklahoma Scenic River Heritage Festival. An official Homecoming '90 event, the day calls for people to rent, or bring their own, canoes and then float anywhere from the Arkansas border to the edge of Tahlequah.

"This time of year," Brocksmith observes, "the river is beautiful. The river is very clear. The dogwoods and redbuds are blooming. There's a lot of wildlife—deer, birds, small game animals. And the water is cold but the air is warm."

Canoeing permits are \$1 available daily from OSRC on Highway 10 just

north of Tahlequah. For permit or rental information or a schedule of festival activities call OSRC at (918) 456-3251.



Sprucing up the Illinois River.

LETTERS

We regret that the back cover photograph (November - December 1989) was incorrectly identified by the photographer as being in Texas County.

Thank you, thank you for the article "The Osage Window" (November-December 1989) by Susan Witt. I hope we get more from her. *Oklahoma Today* is a very enjoyable magazine.

Georgianna M. Havlik
Bison

As an employee of the state Department of Corrections, an article in the November-December 1989 issue of *Oklahoma Today* was especially pertinent.

Readers may not know the Kate Barnard Correctional Treatment Center is named after Kate Barnard. Her efforts regarding early day prisons has not gone unnoticed.

Charles Schroeder
Edmond

Being a native of the great State of Oklahoma, I am an avid reader of your excellent magazine. Living out of state as I do, I look forward to every issue.

On my most recent trip "home," I found a point of interest. We were visiting in Ardmore, the hometown of my wife, Marty, and we found a group in that town that has created the Carter County Museum. If ever there was a true human interest story of devoted people, this is it. They have obtained a building, cleaned it up, accepted donations from hundreds of town folks and are well on their way to the creation of a truly "major" museum.

This group is being led by a dynamic lady by the name of Mrs. Jimmy Brady Rose. These dedicated "Okies" are doing for their town as well as Carter County and southern Oklahoma.

Pete M. Cooper
Naperville, Illinois

I am writing to let you know that the trees pictured in the Portfolio on pages 28-29 of the September-October 1989 issue of *Oklahoma Today* magazine are incorrectly identified. These are actually western soapberry trees (*sapindus drummondii*).

Neil Garrison
Naturalist

Your February 1990 issue is one of the best, especially Robert Mercer's "Big Rig Blues." The photography and copy deserve an award. Why not enter it in a competition or two? (I was on the start-up team and editor for 18 years of *PhotoDesign*.) Please DO IT!

I was born and raised in Lone Wolf, in Kiowa County.

Fred Schmidt
Brooklyn Heights, New York

My wife and I are Pennsylvanians, then lived in Florida for 20 years and retired to the Oklahoma hills of Pushmataha County. We live in a log cabin where deer, turkey and all kinds of wildlife come right up to our back door. (No, I don't hunt. Just with a 35mm camera.)

Thanks for a very good magazine. Really enjoy it and Oklahoma! People say, "when you retire you are supposed to go to Florida." But we retired from Florida to something better.

John and Aida Hildebran
Moyers

NEXT ISSUE: As mom and dad begin to contemplate where to vacation, we'll give you a host of reasons to park the family and the RV in-state this year, with a special issue on Oklahoma small towns and small-town pleasures. We'll take you to Keota where folks still pull out all the stops for Decoration Day and up north to Blackwell where cruising Main still means a stop at the local Sonic for fries and a coke. All this and a trip down Route 66 in the May-June issue of *Oklahoma Today*.

BOOKS

Baby Rattlesnake, told by Te Ata and adapted by Lynn Moroney, Children's Book Press, 1989, \$12.95.

As adults became enamoured with the colors and motifs of the Southwest, it was only a matter of time before books for their children tried to echo those same themes.

Most of these turquoise-and-pink efforts, however, have pleased the eye, and languished on the nursery shelf, for children have a sixth sense for books that fail to integrate their illustrations with the story.

Then up slid *Baby Rattlesnake*.

This simple tale of a young rattlesnake who gets a rattle before he's ready to handle the responsibility is as warm as the desert colors found between its covers. Little eyes will hungrily feast on the illustrations, but with the turning of each page young (and old) minds also will find plenty on which to chew. Baby Rattlesnake acts out his parents' worst fears, yet the erstwhile bad boy learns their arms stay open all night, nonetheless.

The story as told in the oral tradition of the Native American has long been an Indian classic, but in recent years as Indian storytellers have aged the threat of the story being lost to memory had become only too real. "Baby Rattlesnake" endures today because Oklahoma City storyteller Lynn Moroney, herself part Indian, convinced Te Ata, an internationally famous Chickasaw storyteller, to put the tale in book form.

The process happily has only enhanced the story. Te Ata's timeless tale glows thanks to the vivid illustrations of Californian Veg Reisberg. Te Ata, Oklahoma's first official Oklahoma State Treasure, may have had reservations about letting her story be written down, but Moroney's classic interpretation should have laid them to rest.

—Jeanne M. Devlin

The Pioneer Woman

The story behind the statue

By Linda Plemons

She began as a challenge to "make a statue to the vanishing American, a Ponca, Otoe or an Osage—a monument of great size," issued by an unknown source in 1926, to Ernest Whitworth Marland, philanthropist, oilman, U.S. congressman and tenth governor of Oklahoma.

In the kitchen of a friend, with a scotch and soda in his hand, Marland reportedly looked around him at the women tugging at their short skirts, pressing their knees awkwardly together, tossing their bobbed hair and smoking cigarettes and replied: "The Indian is not the vanishing American. It's the pioneer woman."

And so Ponca City got not an Indian but a Pioneer Woman as a statue.

"Marland intended from the beginning," says Jan Prough, director of the Pioneer Woman Museum in Ponca City, "for the statue to represent not the flapper of his day but the pioneer woman. It was to represent women of all races, creeds and nationalities."

He began the project by asking 12 of the country's leading sculptors to submit models for the statue. To help the sculptors visualize a pioneer woman, Marland sent each a sunbonnet—a feminine trademark of the pioneer days. Ten of the sculptures ultimately included a bonnet. "Art

critics universally disliked the bonnet," though, says Ms. Prough. (*New York Evening Post* critic Margaret Breuning dismissed the accessory as "a decidedly unsculptural headgear.")

Artists found other common ground. Eleven of the sculptors depicted the pioneer woman as a mother. A good many showed her with children. Ten portrayed her as a young woman.

Yet, differences also existed. Jo

Davidson, known for his famous statue of Will Rogers, showed an older woman standing alone and unarmed looking out over the prairie. A. Stirling Calder, who made the effort as did Davidson, to travel to Oklahoma to study the frontier and the women who helped tame it, sculpted a woman who gently holds an infant and firmly grips a rifle.

The model by New Yorker Bryant Baker, however, Breuning fumed, featured a "pretty lady leading a little boy in his Eton suit and shining 'morning face.'" She much preferred the harsh reality captured by James Fraser in his model of an Indian woman nursing a child with one arm while cradling a rifle in the other.

To elicit public feedback, the Reinhardt Galleries of New York put the 12 models on tour. Viewers in the 12 cities were urged to vote for their favorite. During the six-month tour, more than 750,000 did, most singling out Baker's model as

the best—though many Southwesterners voted for Davidson's entry. It would be Marland's vote that mattered. In the end, however, his choice echoed public sentiment: Bryant Baker's "pretty" statue, entered only a month before the deadline, won the competition.

"In trying to symbolize the Pioneer Woman of America, I wanted first to depict Courage and Faith," said Baker of his winning model. "She steps out



Bryant Baker put the "Pioneer Woman" on a pedestal.

without fear, doubt or uncertainty—a moving force like the great nation itself.”

Leading her son, the pioneer woman represented “radiant woman throughout the centuries making her priceless contribution to the ages—the man of tomorrow.” The bundle in her arms, Baker added, “represents both the burden of life and all her worldly goods.”

Baker’s model, along with the other 11, belonged to Marland who later sold them to oilman Frank Phillips for Woolaroc Museum near Bartlesville, where they remain on display. Baker then produced a statue, a refinement on his winning model, for the Ponca City site.

It was an unlikely commission for the New Yorker. Known for his busts of European royalty and American statesmen, Baker had sculpted six Oklahomans—among them E.W. Marland, Will Rogers and Frank Phillips, but he was by no means a Westerner. He relied on models in New York City as he developed his Pioneer Woman. Though he reportedly talked to Oklahoma pioneers before tackling the project, his naivete about life on the plains shows in his original model for the statue—the boy the woman leads by her side is dressed in a three-piece suit with fitted pants.

By the time Baker completed the final version—three years after the contest—someone had set him straight: the boy wears rough trousers, an open-necked shirt and work boots.

“Someone told me a pioneer boy of a hundred years ago would not have worn a double-breasted vest, that a woolen shirt would have been more in keeping with the times. Now I have chosen to think a little differently of the boy and his mother,” Baker would later explain.

Though some, like Breuning, questioned the artistic merit of Baker’s model, the statue was dedicated in a ceremony (complete with parade, 19-gun salute, fiddling contests and horse-shoe pitching) in Ponca City on April

22, 1930, the 41st anniversary of the Oklahoma Land Run. Governor W.J. Holloway declared the day a holiday and the festivities drew more than 40,000 people to the rural Oklahoma town.

While Marland spent lavishly for the statue itself (reports range from \$2,000 per model to \$100,000 for the statue), the final pricetag is a mystery.

***Marland looked at the
women tossing their
bobbed hair and
smoking cigarettes:
“The Indian is not the
vanishing
American—it’s the
pioneer woman.”***

What is known is that by the time it was dedicated in 1930, says Ms. Prough, about \$350,000 had been spent to pay the sculptors, tour their models, commission the statue itself, build its base and pay for the celebration.

Broke from the aftermath of the depression of ’29 and the shenanigans of his East Coast business partners, E.W. Marland found it impossible to pay the last trickle of bills necessary to get the statue dedicated. Townspeople raised some money to pay off the debt. But, in the end, Marland’s archenemy, Lew Wentz, a wealthy Ponca City oilman, stepped in with the final \$25,000 needed. “But to say Wentz paid for the statue would just be wrong,” says Ms. Prough. “Twenty-five thousand dollars was nothing to Wentz. He was as wealthy as Marland had been.”

Located in the hub of Ponca City, the bronze statue stands 17 feet high and weighs 12,000 pounds. Mounted on a pyramid-like base, it towers 30 feet over six acres of land Marland deeded to the State of Oklahoma and

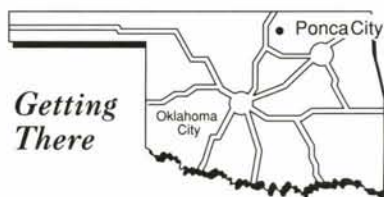
eight acres the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce eventually purchased from the Marland estate to house the Pioneer Woman Museum. The site, known as “Twin Bridges,” is a former camp for Boomers, Sooners and cowboys.

On September 16, 1958, the 65th anniversary of the opening of the Cherokee Strip for settlement, a museum was constructed just east of the statue. This native stone structure houses mementos of those pioneer days, donations from Oklahoma families in memory of the pioneer woman. Ms. Prough hopes plans for a new 10,000-square-foot addition, which would include a timeline of women’s accomplishments, will eventually allow the museum to become a center for women’s studies, with a focus on Western women.

“With a song in her heart, she marches straight into the future. No trick of fate or blow of circumstances will stop the onward sweep of her spirit,” Bryant Baker once said of the Pioneer Woman.

The same could now be said of the museum that bears her name. 

Linda Plemons is a Tulsa-based writer.



The Pioneer Woman Statue and Museum are at 101 Monument Road in Ponca City, at the intersection of U.S. 77 and Highland/Lake roads. The museum is open in March, from Wednesday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sundays, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Beginning in April the museum will also be open Tuesdays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (From November through March, the museum is closed both Mondays and Tuesdays.) Admission is free. For more information, call (405) 765-6108.

*When the wind
goes sweeping
down the plains:*

GO FLY A KITE

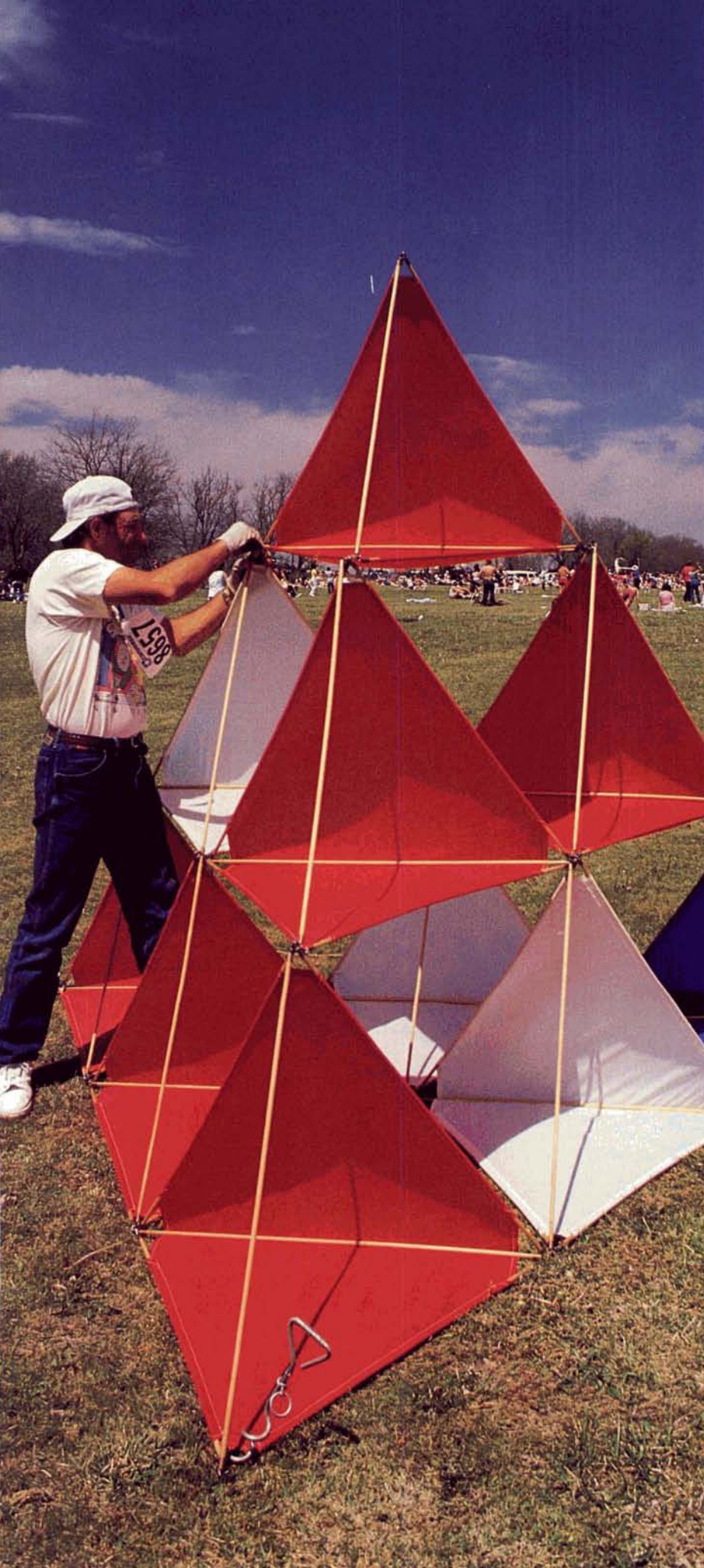
By Sandi McDaniel
Photographs by
Christopher Weeks

They are spring's dancing fools—a cotillion of primary colors stretched out like a lazy Sunday daydream, twisting and spinning at the whim of earthbound humans.

Boxed kites, stacked kites, diamonds and deltas. Kites with clown faces, stars and stripes, rainbows, birds, dragons and butterflies—giant, puffed kites and delicate miniatures—streamer kites with long, sexy spider legs that tickle the clouds.

Kiting, it seems, is made for the vastness of Oklahoma. And the heav-

The inventor of the pyramid tetrahedral kite was none other than Alexander Graham Bell. His design combined the lifting power of a box kite with the power and speed of angular kites. (Staunch kiting enthusiasts may appreciate this invention more than the telephone.)





This was the largest kite flown at the largest kite festival in the state—radio station KMOD's Kite Flight in Tulsa. At the yearly festival, serious kitefliers mingle with folks just out for the sunshine. (This kite's glory was brief. By day's end it was in tatters.)

ens know, Oklahoma's passion for it is percolating. The excitement stems, kite fliers say, from man's basic urge to fly and the invention of high-tech, two-string kites that border on flying machines.

"Stunt" kites have turned kiting into high sport.

You can see evidence of this on wind-swept days at Lake Hefner, near Oklahoma City. Here, kites are bought, sold and flown throughout the year. Parked on the east shore most weekends is a brightly colored van with Kinetic Kites painted on its side. The van's owner, Glenn Short, says business has grown steadily since he and his 22-year-old daughter, Carrie, began selling kites at the lake in August of 1987.

When his daughter came to him with the idea for the business, Short, an Oklahoma City architect, told her she was crazy. But he far underestimated the interest the new kites would produce. "(People) come out and stop and take pictures and talk kites," Short marvels.

Children and the elderly have long been fast fans of kiting, but stunt kites

are popular with a variety of ages who enjoy competition. "It appeals to an age group that kiting didn't normally attract," says Jim Miller, president of the American Kitefliers Association, based in Maryland.

"I really think it's the subliminal urge to fly." The ecstasy of flight is passed along the trembling string to the human hand.

Tom and Rebecca Hill are such a twosome. The Oklahoma City couple were students at Oklahoma State University when they rediscovered the joy of kiting. In the fall of 1987, they founded Neon Sky. The couple bought what few kites they could afford and began flying them near the school's intramural fields in hopes of stirring some interest. It worked. "We get a lot

of converts. They'll just stop off the street and two weeks later they'll be out there flying their own," says Hill.

Now a mechanical engineer for his family's oil field equipment company in Oklahoma City, Hill still conducts his kite business out of the trunk of his car; he doesn't think it will ever make him a rich man. But he does make enough money at it to keep some kites in stock, get wholesale prices when he buys and maintain a stable of kites for his own enjoyment. That's all he asks.

Kiting in Oklahoma is better for people like the Hills. The couple helped organize the state's first chapter of the American Kitefliers Association, with the hope that club meetings would give fliers a monthly opportunity to talk kites and weekends would provide members an excuse to fly kites together. "A lot of adults who would enjoy flying a kite don't because they think it's for kids," explains Hill. "Just in the last few years, that's changed. And we'd like to change it more.

Hill's dream is to eventually organize a national competition that would draw champions from either coast into the state to compete. Competition, he

says, is the next step in promoting stunt kiting in Oklahoma.

Presently, Oklahoma's largest kiting event occurs every April when KMOD radio station in Tulsa hosts its annual Kite Flight. Last year, only 100 people actually competed in categories ranging from largest kite to most outstanding crash, but 12,000 more showed up to gawk. There were no stunt kite competitions that day, but there were certainly stunt kites in the air.

Hill says the point of stunt kite competitions is to exhibit one's control and expertise in maneuvering a kite. In some respects, it is much like figure skating. There are a series of compulsory moves, set by AKA, that the pilot must show, usually followed by a free-style category that allows the kiteflier to fly creatively.

Competitors move their kites quickly through their paces and drop them with fury nearly to the ground—that eye-level height that gains the kiteflier the greatest speed. But speed is merely showmanship—a chance to wow the crowds. What counts most is precision—the ability to color within the lines of the sky.

Such control is valued for safety reasons, too. Because stunt kites commonly exceed speeds of 75 miles per hour, a crash into a crowd has the potential to cause serious injury. Perhaps the most publicized kiting tragedy occurred in 1983 in Long Beach, Washington, when Steve Edeiken, a kite designer, was killed while trying to help a group of college students set a world record with a kite nearly one-half the size of a football field. Edeiken fell some 300 feet to his death after becoming entangled in lines as the mammoth kite swept into the air.

That massive kite illustrates the variety in kites and kite building. As long as it flies, there are no rules. Some kite fans make miniature kites small enough to hold in the hand. Others sew kites designed to look like traditional quilt patterns or stained glass.

What makes such innovation possible on a toy that was once the antithe-

sis of high-tech is a featherweight, waterproof material called ripstop nylon that stops punctures from becoming tears, holes from becoming rips. Quite a change from paper kites routinely put out of commission by tree branches. High-tech string allows the new kites great height and speed. And ripstop nylon can easily be sewn into a kite using a teflon footing on any sewing machine.

Hill recommends the Aero Stunter, a three-foot diamond kite that costs \$19 for beginning fliers.

The hottest kite in the sky today is a double-triangle design known as the "Revolution I." It retails for nearly \$300 and is delicately controlled by a system of four strings. The design allows the pilot to maneuver the kite into amazing positions, including standing on its head in the sky.

That's pretty fancy kiting, says Richard Dermer, a Stillwater restaurant owner and regional director of the AKA. But sometimes, the simple things in life are best. Usually poised for liftoff beneath his AKA flag at kiting events is Dermer's favorite stunt kite—a black, red, yellow and orange Super Stardart, its right wing torn and lovingly patched in zigzag.

"Nothing here is for sale," Dermer happily tells the curious who wander up to examine his stack of 25 Skynasurs, his Deltas and his row of homemade garbage-bag kites. Dermer has attended kiting events across the country. His five-state AKA region includes Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma.

Dermer says he became interested in stunt kites when a friend bought into a Colorado kite production company called Skynasaur in 1986. Dermer remembers the day his friend introduced him to stunt kiting. "He came tearing in and said, 'Rich, you've got to try this new kite I've discovered.'"

Dermer had loved kites since he was a boy. And after a test flight of one of the stunt kites, he was hooked. Soon, he was mixing with "dedicated" kitefliers and adding to a growing kite col-

CLASS KITES

A few years ago, Jon Wagner came up with an innovative way to get his seventh-graders to think about wind. "I let them go out and play in it," says the Oklahoma City schoolteacher. "I don't know any other way to talk about wind besides getting out and using it."

With kites in tow, four or five times a year, Wagner's science classes at Mayfield Junior High School head for open fields nearby to study wind dynamics. Sometimes, as many as 20 kites fill the air while Wagner talks about meteorology and how the earth uses wind.

"I'm trying to get them to understand wind scales—how to measure wind, what causes wind. You'd be surprised how many kids reach this age without ever having flown a kite before," says Wagner sadly.

Wagner, 38, who lives in Edmond, has flown traditional one-string kites since he was a kid. He doesn't try to mask his love for them. When two years ago a student brought a stunt-kite catalogue to class one day, Wagner's interest was piqued by the variety and engineering of two-string kites. The beauty of stunt kites, says Wagner, is their power and maneuverability. "You're actually dancing with the wind," he says.

Since rediscovering kites, Wagner has acquired "more than 20." He's not fudging. He refuses to count his kites. "My wife has been asking," he says. "And this way I can say, 'I don't know.'"

—Sandi McDaniel



Jon Wagner teaches his students that they can "dance with the wind."



Kites are more than just pretty faces: they were instrumental in developing air travel; they've been used to build bridges and to carry cameras for espionage. When one famous kite, with 45,000 cells, was launched from a ship, it promptly dragged the ship back to shore.

lection. He now owns "in the vicinity" of 160 kites.

Like a fighter pilot, Dermer calls kite enthusiasts his "flying buddies." When they get together, they tell war stories—about kiting. Usually the tale involves a wild kite line slicing into one of theirs in monster winds, severing \$200 kites which invariably fly into the ocean, lake or canyon. Nobody gets hurt.

Dermer is undaunted by such mishaps. After all, this is the man whose "emergency kit" at kiting events contains not iodine and bandages but a boomerang, bubble blowing solution and a Frisbee—antidotes necessary as diversions when there is no wind.

After becoming involved in the AKA, Dermer and his wife, Marti, traveled with 14 other Americans to exhibit kites at an international kite festival in China in 1985. The reception was intense. "Flying in China was such a rush," Dermer says. "Everywhere I went I felt like a rock star."

The only comparable adoration they've received in the United States,

says Dermer, is that from children. The Dermers often illustrate their kites to school children. When they do, they usually hand out instructions on how to build a kite for \$1. Dermer always hated explaining to children that to buy a stunt kite like the ones he flies could cost big bucks. The young, eager faces always fell immediately. So, the couple began telling them how to build stunt kites out of wooden dowels, plastic tubing and garbage bags. The kites work great in light winds, Dermer promises, and they help get children interested in kiting because they get the added thrill of making their own. There's only one drawback: the dingy colors. "I've been looking and looking for a bright red garbage bag," says Dermer.

When not traveling from kite fest to kite demonstration, the Dermers run a tidy little pizza joint called The Hide-away, a Stillwater tradition for 30 years. "If I put as much interest into the business as I did the kites, I'd be getting rich," says Dermer. Marti Dermer says the kites are simply too much fun.

"There are so many aspects of kite flying," she says.

Everyone can find a way to enjoy the beauty of kites, whether it be in design, construction, demonstration, competition or just observance. Many of the people the couple meets at festivals come simply to see the bright, floating dots dropped against a favorite subject—the sky. Some are wooed by the power of the wind and the height and speed their kites reach in its grasp. And some are motivated by a more ancient desire.

"I really think it's the subliminal urge to fly," says Richard Dermer. By controlling the kite, the pilot, in a sense, is controlling the wind. And the ecstasy of flight is passed along the tremoring string to the human hand.

"It's like you have a live thing up there," Dermer muses. ☐

Formerly of Tulsa, Sandi McDaniel now writes for the Savannah News-Press in Georgia. Christopher Weeks is a Tulsa-based photographer.

A LONG-WINDED LOVE AFFAIR

As a boy, he built kites of newspaper and sticks and ran them into the Kansas sky. When they tore in the powerful wind, he constructed stronger, but more clumsy, kites of brown grocery paper and, later, bedsheets.

John Loy, 73, has traveled years and miles from his boyhood in Chanute, Kansas, but he has never lost his curiosity about kites and why they fly.

After a 40-year career as a chemical engineer and executive with Phillips Petroleum Co., Loy retired in 1979. Still charged with an active mind and a desire to learn, he turned his attention again to kites and today designs and tests kite prototypes in fields near his Bartlesville home.

Three years ago, he took his passion inside. He built a 14-foot-long wind tunnel out of plywood, Plexiglas and an attic fan and set up a kind of "kite lab" in his basement.

Here, looking through windows into the center of his tunnel, Loy can examine how his designs react at different angles and wind speeds. The experimental kites are constructed of clear plastic sheeting, wooden dowels and tape. Once a design has proved worthy of flight, Loy builds a stronger, larger model for the real test: the great outdoors. "You don't want to spend hours making one of these kites and have it smash up in five minutes," he explains.

The wind tunnel enables Loy to spot a design's weakness and judge how it will react outside of the lab. He can test where the center of pressure will be and design each kite to perform to the maximum of its flight capacity.

Although he owns two patents, Loy says he is not interested in marketing his designs. "Once I fly a kite a couple of times, I'm finished with it. I just want to study performance and analyze it," he says.

Loy credits much of the popularity of today's kiting with

the colorful ripstop nylon now being used in production. There's an aesthetic appeal, he says. And that's fine. But for Loy, the beauty of the kite is in its aerodynamics. "Maybe no more than one in 100 kitefliers have any idea of the wind dynamics of kiting," says Loy. "They don't care if the kite flies at angles of 40 degrees or 60 degrees. I do. I want it to fly at 60 degrees."

As a Phillips executive in Japan, Loy built his first wind tunnel more than 10 years ago but found it was too small for his Tokyo apartment. It took him a few weeks and about \$600 to build the machine he now uses. That's not including labor, and he's quick to admit he's slow. Anybody can build a wind tunnel, he says, if you have the space for it and a patient spouse.

His is the opposite of the old story about the man who built a boat in his basement, then couldn't get it out. "I couldn't get (the tunnel) into the basement," Loy says.

He built the wind machine in his garage, which left his wife's car sitting out in the snow. When Loy decided to move the contraption inside, he had to saw it into sections and then rebuild it.

Now, the wind machine fills most of one small basement room that is cluttered with books and magazines on kiting, kite-building materials and kites in progress. The machine makes a wisping noise as it lifts a kite on a soft breeze. "This is also a good way to clean your house," Loy jokes. "It blows the dust out."

Loy says he is delighted with the renewed interest in kiting, because he finds more people with which to share his labor of love. He says he will continue designing kites and flying them as long as there is wind and sky.

"There's no end to it," Loy says. "Because there's no end to innovation."

—Sandi McDaniel



John Loy in his kite laboratory.



Getting There

The granddaddy of the state's kiting events is the annual Kite Flight—now in its 12th year—hosted by radio station KMOD in Tulsa. The all-day event is scheduled for April 22 (in case of rain, on April 29) at

the Carl Smith Sports Complex, 21st and Lynn Lane, in east Tulsa. The event has drawn anywhere from 10 to 20,000 participants. For more information, call KMOD at (918) 664-2810.

Other organized kiting events in Oklahoma this spring include: On March 17, Spiro Mounds State Park's Family Kite Day features stunt kite-flying demonstrations. The park is three miles east and four miles north of Spiro, on S.H. 9. For information, call (918) 962-2062.

On May 19, the Oklahoma City Kite Festival for Cystic Fibrosis will be held on the

east side of Lake Hefner, south of Britton Road, next to the OKC Boat Club. For information call Glenn or Jolene Short at Kinetic Kites, (405) 722-KITE.

If you like kites without the wind, "Colorful Kite Tales," an exhibit at the Omniplex Science Museum in Oklahoma City, tells the history of kites, and explains the principles of tethered flight. During the Asian Festival at the Kirkpatrick Center, on May 18-19, the museum will also sponsor a kite-making class for children. For information, call the Omniplex at (405) 424-5545.



Finding a middle ground

In Kenton, the highest point in the state, and in Tom, at the lowest, folks are folks.

Photographs by Jim Argo and David Fitzgerald

Highway 3, built in an era when roads bent more to the nature of the land, almost perfectly echoes the lines of the landscape it traverses. It cuts a roughly diagonal path, rambling and curving through the piney southeast, then climbing northwest into the flat Panhandle, where its lines are straight and true as a plumb line.

Photographers David Fitzgerald and Jim Argo set out for the two ends of Highway 3: Fitzgerald to Tom, in southeastern McCurtain County, and Argo to Kenton, in far northwest Cimarron County. On

Tom, smack in the heart of the Ouachita Forest, is bounded by pine and hardwood trees. This tree farm, in Bokhoma, is six miles north of Tom.



TOM

KENTON



their faces, the two towns could hardly be more different. Kenton is at the highest altitude in the state, in cattle country—wide-open, windswept terrain. Tom, at the lowest point, lies in a shadowy crook in the road.

Around Tom, forests of tall pine are broken by patchworks of vines and plants so thick that in places it appears to be a solid green wall. Like the forest, Tom's history is deep and exotic. Artifacts dated to 9,000 B.C. have been found there; in 1719, French explorer Bernard

Kenton cozies up to the Black Mesa, 4,973 feet above sea level. Folks are few and far between in the Panhandle, yet bond closely. Husband and wife, Leona and Truman Tucker.





de la Harpe built a fort and trading post north of the Red River. In the next century, Samuel Garland, a Choctaw chief, brought his family and slaves to Tom along the Trail of Tears. His sawmill prospered there, and Garland built a plantation and a school.

Six hundred miles from Tom, dozing in the shadow of the Black Mesa, lies Kenton. Before statehood, Kenton was called the "Cowboy Capital," with a rowdy population of 350, three mercantiles, two hotels, an ice cream parlor and assorted cowboy watering holes.

Brother Miles Wesmer has been the pastor of the First Baptist Church for more than 20 years. His wife, Maralene, spells him by teaching at the Sunday night service. An ancient headstone in the Garland family cemetery.



TOM

KENTON



History, it seems, has left both Tom and Kenton with less than they started. All that's left of Samuel Garland's plantation is the family cemetery; a county vote held soon after statehood moved the seat of local government from Kenton to Boise City, 25 miles to the east. What's endured, however, is enough to make the citizens of Tom and Kenton happy to call their towns home.

Most of the folks around Tom have known each other all their lives. More than a few, like Marshall and Mary Jo McDonald, were born

First Baptist Church is one of three in Kenton. Dr. Galen Smith also pastors another church, Wheelis Baptist, 25 miles away. His wife, Danna, works as a medical technician in Boise City.





there, left and came back. Marshall was born on a hill 300 yards west of his store and his wife, Mary Jo, was born 300 yards to the north.

A forestry lookout tower is, appropriately, in the middle of Tom; the timber industry is a sustaining source of jobs.

Tom has 300 registered voters, a fire station, general store, grocery, garage, senior citizen's center and two churches, including a fine new-looking Baptist Church.

Kenton's business district now consists of a combination general

McDonald's Grocery and Kitchen sells gas, groceries and a hot lunch. Owner Marshall McDonald and his wife, Mary Jo.



TOM

KENTON



store-post office-cafe that serves the 21 people who still live in town. (A hundred more live in western Cimarron County.) There are also three churches. At potlucks at the Baptist Church, confides Leona Tucker, "we all try and outdo each other."

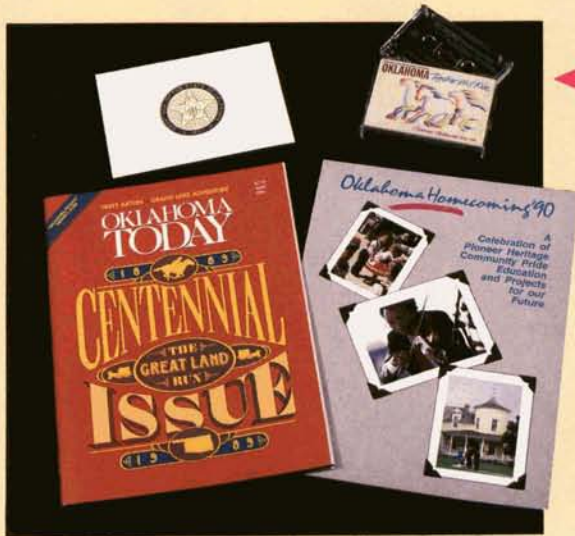
There's more quiet than people in Kenton, which suits Leona Tucker just fine. Leona, formerly a city slicker, brushes away suggestions that Kenton is a ghost town. "Our yards are alive with birds. Our lives are busy," she says. "We tend to value friendships here."

Postmistress Bonnie Hepperd and her husband, Junior, own and operate the Kenton Mercantile, a gathering place for residents. You can pick up your mail there too.



Birthdays, Anniversaries...

Oklahoma Homecoming '90

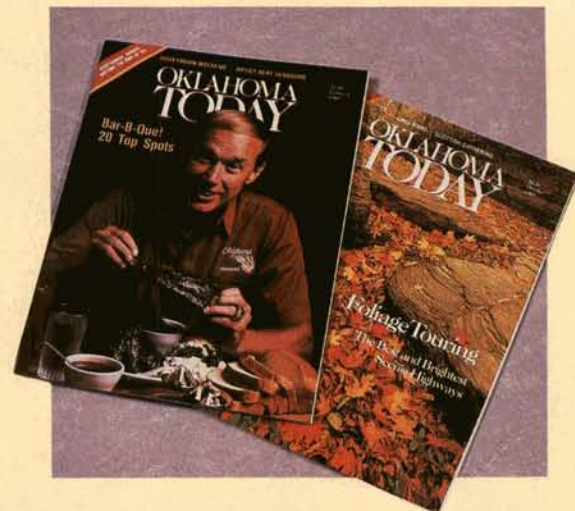


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Oklahoma's ADMIRAL

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William J. Crowe Jr. wielded his influence on United States foreign relations with style — Oklahoma-style.

By W.K. Stratton

Photography by
Steve Sisney

During Admiral Crowe's tenure at the Pentagon, his employees particularly enjoyed staff parties: The admiral would let each pick out a hat from his collection and wear it for the festivities. Right, Crowe with part of his collection now at Oklahoma City's Kirkpatrick Center.

You have to apply the first rule of wing walking, retired Adm. William J. Crowe Jr. reflected one day late last autumn as democracy was rearing its head throughout much of eastern Europe. It was a time of sudden optimism, when newspaper editorial pages proclaimed the death of the Cold War and politicians were giddy at the prospect of cutting the number of American troops in Europe—a move that could save a financially strapped government billions of dollars.

"You know about wing walking, don't you?" Crowe said during an interview from the office he kept at the Pentagon while closing out his affairs as the recently retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

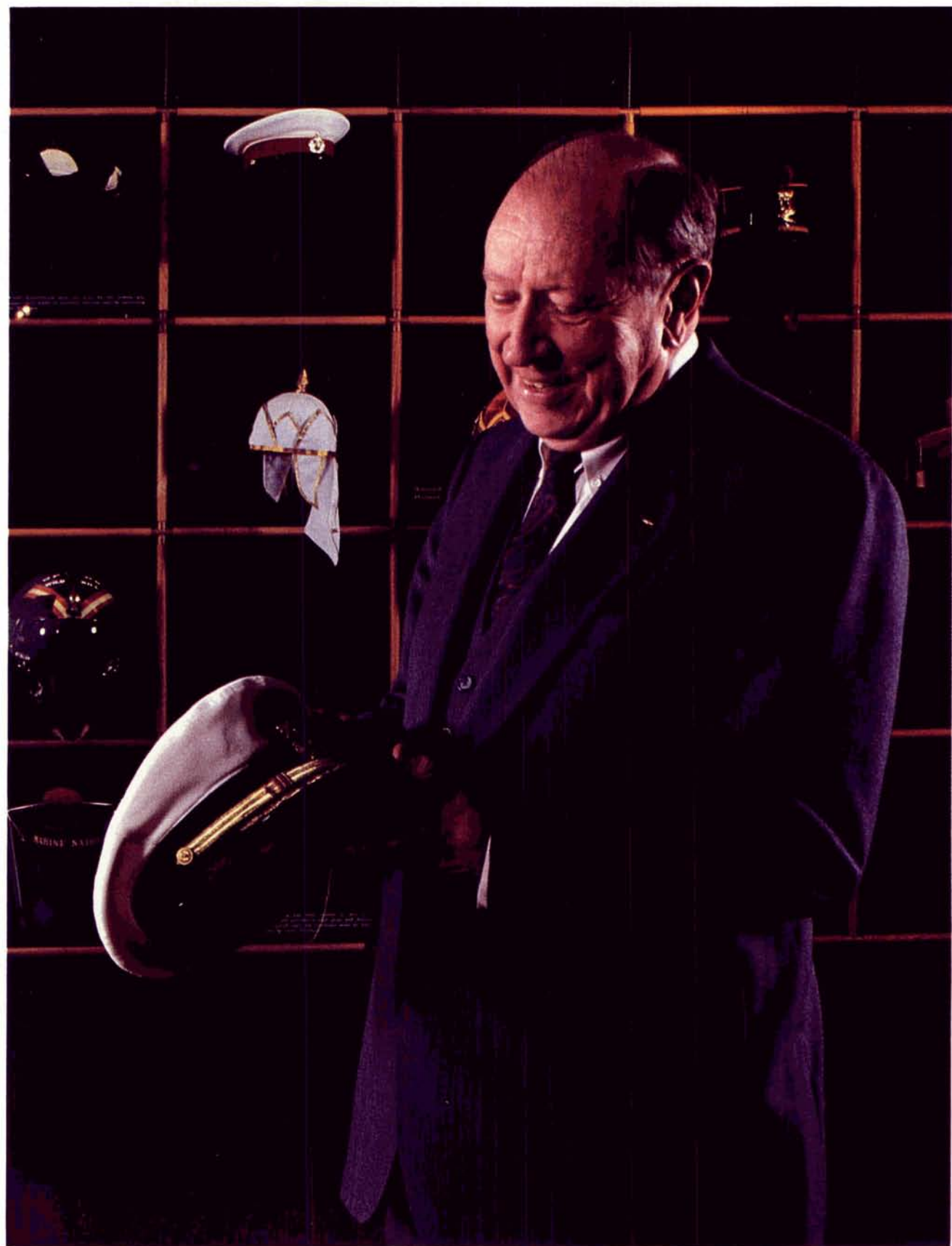
Not convinced his audience did to his satisfaction, the 65-year-old Crowe took a moment to describe old-fashioned air circuses and the act that requires a person to perform acrobatics on the wings of a biplane while it is in flight. "The first rule of wing walking is that you don't let go of anything until you have a hold on something else. Well, we're forgetting that principle in Europe. One weekend of euphoria and we're ready to give away the farm. It would be a mistake to cut back troops now."

It was classic Crowe: Direct, plainspoken. Sorry to dash your dreams of utopia but this is how I see it. Delivered in a voice carrying an accent that his fellow Oklahomans could recognize as their own. Qualities that have made him a favorite in many circles in Washington, D.C., where such qualities too often seem rare indeed.

Looking back on a military career—begun when he signed up for Naval ROTC at the University of Oklahoma as a freshman in 1942 and ended last October when he retired as the nation's highest-ranking military officer—Crowe credited the values he acquired while growing up in Oklahoma for his success. Above all, Crowe learned that it behooves a man to be straightforward.

"My mother taught me that," he said. "She insisted that you not offend people. But she also insisted that you should say what you think."

Students at OU have had the opportunity to hear the straightforward views of Crowe since January. That was when he began using his global perspective to deliver lectures on international issues as a tenured professor of geopolitics, an appointment approved by regents in September. A \$5-million fundraising effort is under way to create the William J. Crowe Chair in Geopolitics.



tics; plans call for Crowe himself to occupy the chair when it is endowed. Teaching is something Crowe has long thought he would like to do. He likes the idea of doing his instructing back home in Oklahoma. It will be a way for the admiral to pay back the state for the values it instilled in him when he was a boy growing up in Oklahoma City. "I think they've given me a lot," he mused aloud.

"(My grandfather) was a real pioneer character. When he visited our home, he always carried a gun. And he always brought along a cot and insisted on sleeping outside."

Crowe (his name rhymes with "now") was born in the Kentucky town of LaGrange in 1925. Though born on foreign soil, so to speak, he is quick to point out that both of his parents were Oklahomans, both graduates of the University of Oklahoma. His father took a law degree from OU and moved to Kentucky to practice his profession. By 1930, the Great Depression had taken its toll on Bill Crowe Sr.'s financial well-being. "The family was in tough shape," the younger Crowe said.

The lawyer pulled a sort of "Grapes of Wrath" in reverse; he moved his family to Oklahoma at the height of the Depression in hopes of finding better times. Eventually the family established a home near the intersection of 21st Street and May Avenue in Oklahoma City.

There young Bill Crowe always looked forward to visits from his maternal grandfather, Fred Russell. Russell was one of those bold souls who helped settle the Sooner State. Russell took part in the Great Land Run of 1889, then, in Crowe's words, "banged around Oklahoma" for a time before opening a hardware business in McAlester. Crowe's family research shows that the business prospered, enough so that Russell was able to buy a ranch. Russell was attempting to break a horse one day there when he ended up breaking his own leg. The leg

did not properly heal, and eventually Russell traveled to the Mayo Clinic for treatment, leaving control of the business in the hands of a manager. While Russell was in Minnesota, the manager apparently used the hardware business as security for investing in the booming stock market of the 1920s—and lost everything. Russell was left broke and lame. "My grandfather had a pretty tough life."

But Russell made a deep impression on his grandson. "He was a real pioneer character. When he visited our home, he always carried a gun. And he always brought along a cot and insisted on sleeping outside."

Cutting an even deeper impression than his grandfather's unusual ways were two big pictures that hung on Crowe's bedroom wall as a boy.

Crowe's father served on the USS Pennsylvania in World War I; those pictures on the bedroom wall depicted ship and crew. The younger Crowe would look at the pictures and dream, as youngsters are wont to do. His parents encouraged the dreaming. Family members say the Crowes went so far as to dress their son in military garb and family photos lend credence to their stories. "I started planning (for a career in the Navy) at a very early age, at 9 or 10," Crowe said.

It is not unusual, he added, for young people from land-locked states like Oklahoma to pursue a military career that could take them to service on the high seas. "(The Navy) draws heavily on the middle of the country."

His father went along with his decision, although there had been a few times when the elder Crowe suggested his son might consider following him into law. Crowe demurred, and his father didn't push it. But on other matters of education, Crowe's father gave his son no choice. Public speaking was one such matter. His father insisted

that Crowe take a course in it as a seventh grader at Taft Junior High School in Oklahoma City. That course directly led Crowe to make what he considers the most important decision of his life: to try out for the debate team at Classen High School.

Some coaches and teachers possess intangible qualities of greatness that inspire their players and students to overreach the boundaries surrounding them and make their lives ones of achievement. Charles E. "Pop" Grady, debate coach at Classen, was by all signs such a person. Crowe remembers that Grady's past students rallied behind him when he decided to run for public office and helped him get elected superintendent of schools for Oklahoma County. Many of his students went on to distinguish themselves in law and politics. Crowe recalls that Grady's teams had won three or four national debating titles. Under Grady, Crowe distinguished himself as one of the state's best debaters (unfortunately for Crowe, the outbreak of World War II prompted the cancellation of national debate competition).

Crowe credits Pop Grady with teaching him two practical skills that have aided him numerous times during his career: to speak extemporaneously and to deliver speeches that stay within time limitations.

After graduating from Classen in 1942, Crowe enrolled at OU and signed up for Naval ROTC. His fellow freshmen thought enough of the future admiral to elect him their class president. Crowe's stay at OU was short. ROTC units around the nation were activated after the United States entered World War II, and Crowe became a member of the Navy proper in the summer of 1943. But he was at OU long enough to become a loyal supporter of Big Red sports, football and wrestling in particular. While commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, he invited Sooner fans in town for the 1983 football finale against the University of Hawaii to the "Admiral's Home" at Pearl Harbor. *Sooner Magazine* reported Crowe wore an aloha shirt and a red Sooner baseball cap when he welcomed guests to his quarters.

A PLACE TO HANG HIS HATS

Last fall staffers of retired Adm. William J. Crowe Jr. were packing hundreds of hats destined for the Admiral Crowe World Hat Collection at the Kirkpatrick Center in Oklahoma City, when the men went a tad overboard. "I had to retrieve a few," says Crowe, with a grin.

Though Crowe had happily agreed to part with nearly a thousand of the hats he had collected during his two terms as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the end there were a few he just couldn't let go. Staffers were dispatched. The boxes reopened. The hats returned, this time to his home to join what Crowe calls his personal favorite: A cone.

"It's a hat," assures Crowe. "It's worn by the Pakistan army's secret service, but they call it 'a cone.' It was a present to me from (the late) President Zia."

An elaborate concoction in blue and gold, the hat has starched folded fabric that stands above the crown like a pleated plume and a softer veil—reminiscent of Lawrence of Arabia—that spills down the back. Crowe likes it for the same reason he tends to favor hats from the Middle East: it is a striking hat but it's also masculine-looking. In fact, this particular hat has only one drawback: "It's leaning," says Crowe.

Reluctant to unfold the hat, much less launder it, for fear he'll permanently reduce his favorite to a piece of cloth, Crowe has decided he has only one recourse. "I'm thinking of taking it over to the Pakistani embassy," he says, with a hopeful look.

This from a man who swears he doesn't wear hats. (The exceptions: a well-worn brown hat to stay off winter's chill and his white-and-gold admiral's hat.)

Crowe admits he never gave much thought to hats until 1976. That year he was traveling in the Land Down Under and was given an Australian army bush hat. It was a funny-looking thing. Woven into a shape much like one a cowboy would wear, it could never, however, be mistaken for a cowboy hat—the rim was trimmed with corks bobbing from string. "There are a lot of flies in the Outback," explains Crowe. "You shake your head and the corks act like a tail on a horse."

Crowe was amused by the hat. "I brought it back to Washington," he remembers, "and got to thinking about it. And I decided to start making a deliberate effort to collect hats."

Over the next few years, word of Crowe's interest in hats spread, and the admiral found himself receiving gifts of hats just about everywhere he went. He also went out of his way to get certain hats that interested him. "I learned that in some parts of the world—particularly the Near East—people put a lot of stock in their hats," he says. In other words, asking a man for his hat was just about akin to asking him for a piece of his soul.



Of the nearly 1,000 hats in the museum collection, the Kirkpatrick Center plans to display 100 hats at a time. Clockwise, from top right, is a Shinto hat worn by referees in Sumo wrestling. One of Crowe's favorites is a gift from General Arthit Kamlang-ek, the Supreme Commander of Thailand Armed Forces. The king's bodyguards wear the hat at the yearly parade celebrating his birthday; the pom's color denotes the branch of service of its wearer. The golden headpiece, also from Thailand, is part of a traditional dance costume.

It eventually became apparent to him that the collection was large enough and culturally representative enough to merit display. There were a 100-year-old French admiral's hat, a University of Southern California Trojan bandman's hat and a New York City beat cop's hat.

And more: Stacks of berets. Military hats with hammer-and-sickle emblems collected in Communist countries. A sombrero, courtesy of former U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater of Arizona. And a triangular paper hat—said to be among Crowe's favorites—fashioned by a youngster named Todd Robertson that bears this message: "To Adm. Crowe—Please keep our country safe."

When it came time to find another home for the hats, Crowe contacted his old friend John Kirkpatrick and was assured the 300 hats would be welcome at Oklahoma City's Kirkpatrick Center.

With Crowe's retirement October 1, the center has added another 700 of the admiral's hats to its collection. Linda Raulston, curator and registrar at the center, says about 50 of the hats are currently on display, with plans calling for that number to double in the near future. The hats put out for public viewing will be regularly rotated with those in storage.

Raulston says she does not know of another hat collection of its scope held by a museum. "The public just loves them."

—W.K. Stratton

In 1943, Mike Monroney, Oklahoma's Fifth District Congressman, appointed Crowe to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. Crowe completed a war-shortened, three-year course of study there.

While home on leave in 1953, Crowe met Shirley Grennell of Okeene, herself an OU graduate. On Valentine's Day of the next year, they married, giving Crowe yet another link to Oklahoma. In fact through the next three-and-a-half decades of globe-trotting, Crowe would always maintain his official residence at Okeene. "I've always considered myself a transient in Washington," said Crowe, who has a house in the Virginia suburb of Alexandria. He is commuting from there while teaching at OU.

A successful military career is not created only by good fortune, nor is it only the result of plain old hard work. Sure, luck and hard work play their parts. But there is more. Choice of commands is important for officers. Make the wrong decision and you can see your career stall out. Practically everyone Crowe knew in the Navy thought he was making a big mistake when he gave up his submarine command in the mid-1960s to take part in a Navy program that allowed a small number of officers to work on doctoral degrees.

"The Navy put no requirements on the silly thing," Crowe said. "You could pick the school and the program you wanted to study. All you had to have was a master's degree." Crowe had a master's degree in education from Stanford, so he qualified. He selected Princeton and its program in politics.

His interest in international affairs had begun a few years earlier when he worked at the Pentagon as an aide for a vice admiral involved with planning and policy. "He was over the shop in the Navy that dealt with politics," said Crowe, who recalls being wide-eyed at his new job. "I was absolutely fascinated with the work that went on around me."

He took his Ph.D. in 1965. He looks back at his decision to go to Princeton

as the most important one he made for his career in the Navy. His career flourished after that. Among the high points: He commanded the U.S. Middle East Force in the Persian Gulf; he was NATO commander in Southern Europe, dealing with such critical problems as the Greek-Turkish dispute and the rise of state-sponsored terrorism; and, of course, he commanded the U.S. Pacific Command, the largest U.S. command in the world, covering more than a million square miles. It was as commander of the latter that he became known well beyond military and political circles. As such he called for the end of U.S. support for Philippines

contact with the president two and three times a day. Though he worked under Presidents Bush and Reagan, Crowe is quickest to praise Bush, a man he describes as being very knowledgeable about the workings of government—Washington in particular—as well as an informed and good listener.

Yet it is thanks to Reagan, who appointed him to his first of two two-year terms as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that Crowe found himself part of some of the most startling developments in international politics of the 20th century. Crowe was the first man to serve as chairman after Reagan signed a law in 1986 changing the Joint

"I took a trip to the Philippines to give Marcos some advice. After meeting with him, I reached the conclusion that he'd gone over the cliff mentally."

dictator Ferdinand Marcos —purportedly the first American official to do so.

"I took a trip to the Philippines to give Marcos some advice," said Crowe. "Well, after meeting with him, I reached the conclusion that he'd gone over the cliff mentally. There was no way in the world we were going to accomplish what we wanted to accomplish with him in power. We had to make the decision that he had to go."

Crowe put his conclusion in writing and dispatched it to Washington. He says sentiment against Marcos began to grow in Washington rapidly.

Crowe was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 1, 1985. The job description puts him at the top of the military's pyramid of command, but basically, Crowe quips the post involved going to meetings. At those meetings both domestic and international, Crowe was charged with representing American interests, more specifically, American military interests. "You spend a lot of time telling people what they don't want to hear," he says. "That we can't do that. That what they want we aren't capable of doing."

Case in point: A president who wants to rescue a group of American hostages in a foreign land.

In times of crisis, Crowe would have

Chiefs of Staff from four officers from the four branches of the military, plus a fifth acting as chairman, to a chairman who acts as the president's principal military adviser and exercises control over the Joint Staff.

Washington insiders are said to have thought Crowe as a Navy man was the right choice for the revamped post, but they also couldn't believe he'd gotten the job. According to a story in the *Daily Oklahoman*, Rep. Les Aspin, the powerful chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, contended, "Admiral Crowe is as close to a rebel as you find that gets to the top in this job."

Crowe made the most of the post. In 1988, he hosted his Soviet counterpart, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, as he toured American defense installations in a ground-breaking effort to ease tensions between the opponents in the Cold War. Crowe wanted to make sure that Akhromeyev got a view of the real America, so he brought him, naturally, to Oklahoma. Akhromeyev left saying, "I have seen the United States because I have seen Oklahoma."

The next year it was Crowe's turn to travel to the lair of what had been considered through most of his career as "the enemy." He went to the Soviet Union to tour theretofore off-limits military bases, places no Americans had

OKLAHOMA RESORT PARKS

Adventure Travel Guide

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Photo: Roman Nose Resort—
A legendary retreat.

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ROMAN NOSE

(ROMAN NOSE RESORT, Front Cover)

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\$125.00 per person, Double Occupancy

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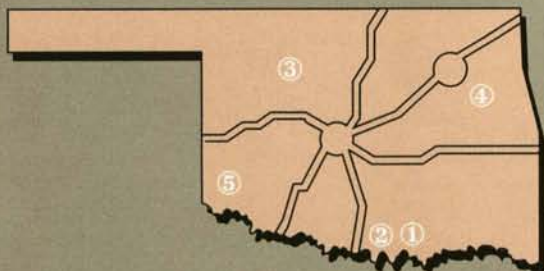
- Two nights lodging, double occupancy, in the cedar and sandstone lodge
- Meals in Redbird Restaurant beginning with dinner upon arrival, ending with breakfast on departure day. One dinner meal is traditional Indian Taco or Hog Fry.
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- A souvenir T-Shirt
- Sales tax and gratuities

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Nestled in a magnificent canyon overlooking mesas dotted with cedar, buffalo grass and wild blue sage, Roman Nose Resort recalls the rich and colorful history of Oklahoma's Plains Indians. Once a favored retreat of the Cheyenne Indian tribe, today Roman Nose is a retreat for you...a secluded setting for swimming in the natural rock swimming pool, challenging a rolling mesa golf course or trout fishing on Lake Watonga.

The cedar and sandstone lodge features a variety of guest rooms, suites and cottages for visitors and serves traditional as well as Indian food favorites in RedBird Restaurant. The State Park features scenic trails to explore the Spring of Everlasting Waters, the historic buffalo kill site, and the former campground favored in the early 1800s.

Today's camper will enjoy modern RV hookups, bathhouses, picnic tables, grills and ranger security throughout the park. All visitors are invited to participate in the resort recreation and interpretation programs which highlight the park's theme of Native American culture. Plan to be at Roman Nose year around. Special events include the Oakerhater Pow Wow in August, Cheyenne Summerfest and Indian Trade Market in May, Christmas in the Park and the Traders Feast in December and the Watonga Cheese Festival in November.



1. Lake Texoma, 13 miles west of Durant on US 70
2. Lake Murray, 2 miles east of I-35, south of Ardmore
3. Roman Nose, 8 miles north of Watonga on SH 8A
4. Western Hills, 8 miles east of Wagoner on SH 51
5. Quartz Mountain, 17 miles north of Altus on SH 44A

WESTERN HILLS *Guest Ranch*

Cowboy Adventure • 3 Days – 2 Nights

\$159.00 Per Person, Double Occupancy

Adventure Includes:

- Two nights lodging, double occupancy in Guest Ranch
- "Stick-to-your-Ribs" meals beginning with dinner upon arrival, ending with breakfast on departure day
- Cowboy snack each evening
- Professional instruction by a real cowboy in horse care (grooming, bridling and saddling), Western riding gaits and roping on mechanical calf
- Guest Ranch T-Shirt
- Sales tax and gratuities

Single Room Occupancy Cowboy Adventure \$209.00

Kids (9 to 18 years old) sharing parent's room \$99.00



Amid the scenic foothills of Sequoyah State Park at Ft. Gibson Lake, an American Cowboy Adventure awaits you at Western Hills Guest Ranch.

Under the supervision of a skilled cowboy instructor, you soon will be riding western style and learning all aspects of horse care.

After a day in the saddle, enjoy a passel of relaxin' activities. From hayrides to tennis, miniature golf to a challenging 18-hole course, and boat tours with the park naturalist to the energetic, recreation program of lawn and pool games, melodramas, two-steppin', and western crafts—there's something for every member of the family.

Mealtime is an event with chuckwagon cookouts, poolside barbecues, "stick-to-your-ribs" meals in Calico Crossing restaurant, or our children's "Little Wranglers" night out, a western cookout with storytelling around the campfire.

Come sunset, join sing-a-longs around the campfire or grab your partner for an evening at Black Jack's Saloon.

After the day is done, retreat to comfortable guest ranch rooms or cottages to soothe tired cowpokes at the end of a busy fun-filled ol' fashioned western day.



LAKE TEXOMA

Striper Fishing Adventure • 3 Days – 2 Nights
\$295.00 Per Person, Double Occupancy

Striper Fishing Adventure Includes:

- Two nights lodging, double occupancy in the resort hotel
- Two days of guided fishing (6 hours per day or limit for two people plus guide per boat)
- Two box lunches
- Two dinners in The Galley Restaurant
- Cleaning and bagging your fish for trip home
- Sales tax and gratuities

Striper Fishing Adventure available daily year around. Advance reservations required. Best fishing months October through April. (Lake Texoma fishing license required, may be purchased at resort hotel.)

Single Room occupancy Striper Fishing Adventure package is \$349.00.

Venture to southern Oklahoma's Lake Texoma Resort Park for an exciting adventure in the land of big water, big fish and great golf. Overlooking 93,000 magnificent acres of man-made water recreation, Lake Texoma Resort accommodates the most discriminating angler and water enthusiast with fishing guide service, a full-service marina, boat ramps, and cleaning station.

Golfers will reel in the sweeping 18-hole golf course, driving range and organized golfing activities with the pro.

Activities abound with hiking trails, horseback riding, boat tours, go carts, miniature golf and an energetic recreation and nature program.

Relax in the fitness and recreation center, around the swimming pool or at the Waterfront lounge.

The atrium hotel features the Galley Restaurant, gift shop, club, meeting facilities and comfortable rooms. Nearby cottages feature fireplaces and kitchenettes. The State Park has scenic RV hookups and group camping.



LAKE MURRAY

Heritage Arts and Crafts Series • 3 Days – 2 Nights
\$163.00 Per Person, Double Occupancy
Quiltmaking • China Painting • Wheat Weaving • Storytelling

Package Price Includes:

- Two nights lodging, double occupancy
- All meals beginning with dinner on arrival day and concluding with breakfast on departure
- Thirteen hours of art instruction by some of Oklahoma's finest folk artists
- Take home your finished art piece(s)
- Sales tax and gratuities

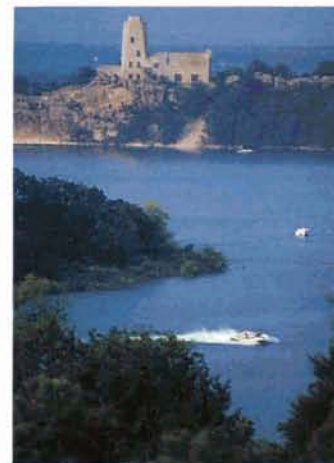


Lake Murray Country Inn welcomes guests with friendly hospitable service, hearty meals, family activities and the beckoning azure waters of scenic Lake Murray.

This heritage resort is tucked away among the beautiful wooded hills of southern Oklahoma. It has been host to generations of satisfied visitors, family reunions and meetings. The country inn surrounds guests with the enchanting decor of the 1900s and offers guest rooms and suites with lake and park views, cottages for two to ten people, many with kitchenettes and fireplaces.

Enjoy homestyle meals in Quilts Restaurant or gather at The Parlor for food, drinks and country tunes. Play in the Dugout game room or browse the gift shop for a handmade souvenir. Families will enjoy the outstanding recreation program provided complimentary to guests year round.

The resort is set in the 12,500-acre Lake Murray State Park, near the Oklahoma-Texas border. Guests can participate in a multitude of recreational activities including fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, paddle boating, tennis, golfing, indoor fishing arena and full service marina. Nearby the resort are attractions like the exotic animals of Arbuckle Wilderness, the 77-foot Turner Falls, historic Ft. Washita and the Chickasaw National Recreation Area.



Tucker Tower Nature Museum

QUARTZ MOUNTAIN

Outdoor Adventure • 3 Days – 2 Nights
\$95.00 Per Person, Double Occupancy

Adventure includes:

- Two nights lodging, double occupancy in redwood and pink granite stone lodge with indoor swimming pool and sauna
- All meals beginning with dinner on arrival day, concluding with breakfast on departure day
- Sunrise, sunset, day and night outings with the Park Naturalist including interpretive walks, bird watching, foliage and wildlife identification, star gazing and caves
- Sales tax and gratuities

Outdoor Adventure available daily year around
Single Occupancy \$139.00



A rugged and romantic outdoor adventure, a center for the arts, the granite hills of Quartz Mountain rise from the plains of south-west Oklahoma with breathtaking drama. The sandy shores of Lake Altus-Lugert roll up to the resort's front door. The overall view is so unique, so rich in beauty, one can understand why the Kiowa and Comanche Indians regarded it as sacred grounds.

Cradled in the mountains is a two-story native stone and redwood timber lodge with 45 rooms, suites, Finale Restaurant, indoor swimming pool and sauna and a year-around recreation and interpretive program. Nearby are cottages which will sleep two to six people with kitchenettes as well as Mountainview, a dormitory-style lodge for 64 people, complete with screened porch, kitchens and restrooms.

This popular resort destination hosts many group activities and is the home of the acclaimed Oklahoma Arts Institute. Summer and fall workshops are available for high school students and adults.

The 6,260-acre Lake Altus-Lugert is a playground for watersports, bass and crappie fishing and winter trout fishing in the upper stream. The dramatic hills are a scenic backdrop to an outstanding golf course with pro shop and resident pro.

The state park is the real attraction featuring intriguing hiking trails guided by the Park Naturalist who will share with you the unusual number of varieties of grasses, wildflowers and native wildlife habitat that abound in the area.

Adventure Package rates are subject to change.

When the seasons change, the crisp fall air and soft spring air are filled with the cries of a wide variety of waterfowl stopping in to rest on their migration route. The most prestigious guest is the American Bald Eagle who seeks refuge in the park from November to March. Eagle watches are conducted by the Park Naturalist. Each May the resort park hosts the State Wildflower Festival, a weekend of education, festivities, photo safaris and fun. Quartz Mountain has become a popular overnight stay for hunters of quail, dove and turkey. Hunting packages and art workshop packages are also available.



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Great Salt Plains	8 miles north of Jet on SH 38
Greenleaf	3 miles south of Braggs on SH 10
Keystone	16 miles west of Tulsa on US 64, 2 miles south on SH 151
Osage Hills	10 miles west of Bartlesville on US 60
Robbers Cave	5 miles north of Wilburton on SH 2
Tenkiller	9 miles northeast of Gore on SH 100
Wister	2 miles southeast of Wister on US 270

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visited since the close of World War II when the United States and the USSR were allies.

Though Crowe opted against serving a third term, he now complains that no one consults a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Nonetheless he plans to return to the Soviet Union this year to see for himself the ramification of recent changes. His views on world affairs will continue to be aired, too—this time on the lecture circuit and in a book he has in the works. Already, he says, he misses the mounds of briefing papers that used to cross his desk each day. “The hardest part (of following world events),” he says, “is staying up with it.”

A grumpy look makes it clear this admiral isn't happy about getting his news compliments of the media.

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Crowe maintained perhaps a higher visibility than most of his predecessors. One thing that brought him broad national attention was a profile on CBS's highly rated news program, “60 Minutes.” Mike Wallace, who has the reputation of being one of the most merciless of hatchet wielders in television news, would interview Crowe. “Everyone over here (at the Pentagon) detests him,” said Crowe.

Since a controversial piece on Gen. William Westmoreland aired several years earlier, he added, Wallace had been persona non grata at the Pentagon. Crowe was advised by the White House and the Office of the Secretary of Defense to decline the interview, but Crowe's public affairs officer suggested that the admiral accept, which Crowe did. When he encountered the acerbic Wallace, Crowe followed his Oklahoma mother's advice: He was

straightforward; he did not try to mislead Wallace. It worked. Wallace described Crowe as “candid, spirited and often surprising.” Crowe said, “Mike was very evenhanded.” And, the two men became friends. Later, Wallace



You've heard what they say about having your photo taken, Crowe quipped once: "You ask for mercy not justice." It was classic Crowe humor. Above, the Admiral at age 5.

and “60 Minutes” did another piece on Crowe, this one concerning his historic trip to the USSR.

But Crowe admits that another, far less serious, television appearance did more to contribute to his fame. An interviewer from *Time*, putting together a profile of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, asked Crowe about his leisure activities. Crowe responded that he likes to play tennis and to read—and, well, yes, he 'fessed up, he liked to watch television, his favorite show being “Cheers.” “About two days after the *Time* interview came out,” said Crowe, “the producer of ‘Cheers’ was on the phone to ask if I would like to be on the show.”

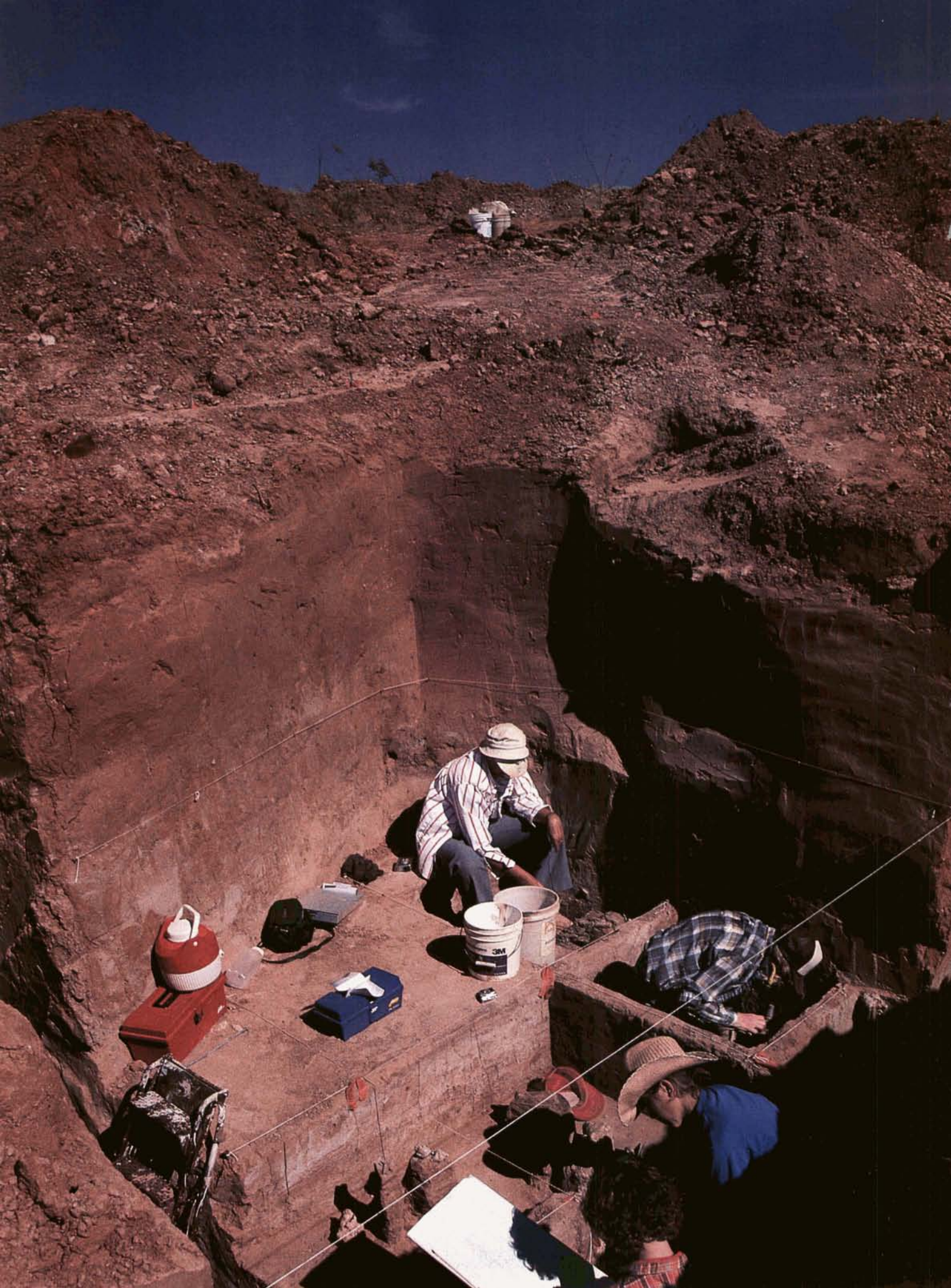
The admiral agreed to tape a sequence while he was in Los Angeles to make a speech. And so Crowe stepped into sitcom land, there to join Sam and the gang at the fabled Boston pub. “Five minutes on ‘Cheers’ did more to make me famous than anything else,” Crowe said. “After the show aired, people would come up to me and say, ‘I saw you on ‘Cheers.’ Oh, and, you sure are doing a good job there in Washington.’ ”

Patience is a pretty good policy,” Crowe said, speaking again on the amazing political developments in Eastern Europe. “The United States refused to be intimidated (by Soviet military strength in Eastern Europe). We're not going to be intimidated. A smart guy like Gorbachev comes along and realizes this.” Then the United States gets its payoff, the rise of democracy in Communist Europe. “Nobody can persuade me that our investment in security has been misplaced. Communism is drying up and blowing away. Pluralism is the wave of the future.”

Crowe confesses that he is witnessing events that he never expected to take place in his lifetime. Still, he is somewhat concerned about how Americans are reacting to those events. “Everybody is talking about the reunification of Germany when we don't even know what kind of government East Germany is going to have. We are so damned impatient.”

There you have it. Plainspoken, straightforward. It would make his Oklahoma mother proud. 

W.K. Stratton is an Oklahoma native who now lives in Texas. Steve Sisney is a photographer for the Daily Oklahoman.





VACATION DIGS

Uncovering the secrets of the state's prehistoric past

By Andy Morgan

Daryl Coley nudges a paint scraper into the barren surface of a one-meter square of hard Woods County earth. He peels away a wafer-thin slice of the clay and, as if it were about to explode, cautiously lifts it up and over to a plastic bucket.

For four days, it's been like this. Coley, his cramped working area marked by four strands of white string, slowly scraping, scooping and saving slices of soil. And in four days, he has dug to a depth of about nine inches.

Luckily, Coley isn't digging swimming pools—he's looking for artifacts. And his seeming lack of progress is just about right for archaeology. "A pick ax would be nice," Coley laughed, "but it's better to take it slow."

His coworkers—more than 20 men and women whose ages stretch from 18 to nearly 80—would agree. Like Coley, they are scrunched into one-meter, string-bordered squares. And, like Coley, they show no sign of letting up. No matter that already by late morning, the temperature has soared to 90 degrees. And too-frequent swirls of red grit blast across the hillside stinging bare skin and sneaking into squinting eyes.

Quitting now is out of the question. Not when the next quarter-inch of soil could reveal the remains of a 26,000-year-old bison, an ancient flint chip or even the bones of

the first Oklahoman. "I'll keep doing this until I'm 90 years old," said Charlette Gifford, 46.

This particular excavation, or dig, makes about a dozen for the petite Gifford, who like many of her coworkers, has taken vacation time to be here and to work for free. Digging for remnants of the past is not your typical outdoor vacation, but it's more typical in Oklahoma than you might think. A state that archaeologists describe as one of the "best-kept secrets" in the business, Oklahoma has more than 13,000 archaeological sites, and experts say that figure probably reflects only 5 percent to 10 percent of what's actually out there. "It's the best place to be if you're an archaeologist," says Don Wyckoff, director of the Oklahoma Archeological Survey, emphatically.

"The best."

His cohorts at OAS agree. "I think Oklahoma has some of the greatest potential for studying Native Americans in the country," said Robert L. Brooks, a state archaeologist with OAS. "We not only have this great prehistoric record, we have the descendants of the prehistoric people living here, the Caddos and the Wichitas."

In many states such archaeological abundance would be all well and good if you were an archaeologist and a constant sore spot if you were an archaeological buff. "In most states the professionals and the amateurs are enemies," Wyckoff explains, matter-of-factly.

Such animosity often means an amateur who longs to spend his vacation on a dig with archaeologists in his home state can't. Not so in Oklahoma. Dr. Robert Bell,

Near Freedom, a farmer was grading a slope by a pond with a backhoe when he turned up some interesting old bones. Here volunteers help to excavate the trench made by the backhoe: the bones were those of prehistoric horses, found in sediment determined to be 30,000 to 35,000 years old.



A reproduction of a dinosaur bone marks Cimarron County as dinosaur country.

one of Oklahoma's first archaeologists, realized a single scholar couldn't do justice to the sites in the Sooner State if he ran a one-man show. Since he wasn't in a position to hire professionals, Bell turned to volunteers. The result, says Wyckoff, is that Oklahoma has one of the best and most active amateur archaeological societies in the nation. Known as the Oklahoma Anthropological Society, it lists some 500 members. Wyckoff relies heavily on these eager amateurs, as do the five other state ar-

chaeologists on his staff. "We have a tradition here of welcoming people who want to learn on our digs," says Wyckoff. "I won't hire anyone who won't work with amateurs."

The end result is that digging for the past has become a viable vacation alternative in Oklahoma, one that lets people experience the great outdoors while learning more about their state, the animals who once roamed here, the plants that once grew here and the men and women who first settled here tens

of thousands of years ago.

"You get hot and thirsty and hungry and tired and right now, it's really dusty," Charlette Gifford said.

"But I love every minute of it."

Don Wyckoff lives his work. He may say if he were to take a vacation, he wouldn't spend it on a dig but the punch line, of course, is that Wyckoff can't remember the last time he took a vacation.

The man likes his job.

And he loves Oklahoma.

Lately, the silver-haired Wyckoff and several others interested in early man have had reason to be very excited. Wyckoff, backed by funding from the National Geographic Society, is heading an excavation in Woods County in far northwest Oklahoma that could lend credence to theories that humans existed in North America twice as long ago as previously thought.

This excavation, called the Burnham site after the land's owner, would add to the state's list of prehistorically significant locales. It's a list that already includes places such as the Spiro Mounds in far eastern Oklahoma and the Domebo site near Anadarko, both important for the quantity and quality of information discovered there; it's also a list, Wyckoff says, that makes greater the need for amateur archaeologists. "There's no way six archaeologists could do all that needs to be done," he says.

State archaeologists, for one, do more than head digs. Back in Norman at the vintage World War II offices of the OAS, Wyckoff's staff also deals with the bureaucracy of Oklahoma archaeology. It is paperwork that helps to preserve an irreplaceable past.

Under current law, the Oklahoma Archeological Survey must be consulted before any ground is disturbed on large-scale projects, projects receiving any federal funding or those occurring on federal or state lands. A 1936 state law also makes it unlawful to dig, collect, destroy or damage known archaeological sites on state, county or



Grave robbing: Stealing the past from the future

To look at the site, or a photograph of it, you would think a gopher the size of a human had been at work on someone's lawn. Huge mounds of black dirt are piled one after another across the landscape.

But no gopher did this.

Humans did. Humans in search of prehistoric treasures. "What they are is simply grave robbers," says Don Wyckoff, director of the Oklahoma Archeological Survey.

While drilling, construction and agriculture all pose risks to prehistoric artifacts in Oklahoma, antiquities face a sure and growing threat from people who illegally excavate and steal ancient artifacts for profit. Throughout southeast Oklahoma, prehistoric cemeteries and early Native American settlements have been ravaged by pot hunters, literally people trying to dig up ancient pottery.

"It's the same problem they have in South America," said Larry Neal, an archaeologist with the Oklahoma Archeological Survey. "People in New York want a pot to put on the mantle and they don't care how they got it or what they have to pay for it."

"Unfortunately, these looters have no more conscience than to go out and dig up bones that are 5,000 years old," Neal said. "They will dig up anybody's grave to get these things."

Though some Native Americans feel OAS excavations do the same thing, Wyckoff believes the survey has a conscience. It works with tribes to return, and rebury, what it finds once it's been recorded. Not so with pot hunters. Neal, who recently received a \$38,000 grant to locate and record archaeological sites in Oklahoma, said that last fall, he found numerous locations that had been ravaged by pot hunters—some so badly that human bones littered the area.

He said a site near Hartshorne where people are thought to have lived some 2,000 years ago was nearly destroyed by looters. Why is southeastern Oklahoma worse than other pockets of the state? "Partly, it's access," Neal said. "Partly, the area has been traditionally economically depressed. Partly, because of the absolute interest in the stuff."

In 1987, state archaeologist Robert L. Brooks spearheaded

OKLAHOMA ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY



When vandals raid sites such as this Caddoan burial mound, "pages of history are lost forever," says Wyckoff.

a successful drive to pass legislation that protects ancient cemeteries. The statute established a maximum \$1,000 fine and two-year prison term for anyone convicted of illegally excavating cemeteries. Previous laws covered only modern-day cemeteries, Brooks said. Oklahoma passed a state antiquities law in 1936 that protects archaeological sites on state, county and municipal land. Brooks believes most grave robbers are part of a network engaged in artifact trafficking. "It's a true market economy," he said.

Items stolen from ancient Oklahoma graves are shipped to the East Coast as well as to Japan and Germany, Brooks said. Pottery and engraved shells fetch prices well into the thousands. Neal believes in addition to fines and jail sentences, educating landowners is a key to curtailing grave robbing. "Most of the landowners I've talked to didn't realize that it was illegal," he said. "Most people down there (in southeast Oklahoma) do not go around digging up graves," Neal said. "It's probably a small percentage that do it. They just do it a lot."

—Andy Morgan

municipal property without the state archaeologist's permission.

Those building or drilling on private lands, however, have no obligation to contact the OAS. "Which means there's some amount of cultural heritage lost in Oklahoma because we don't get a chance to review it," said Robert Brooks, who works daily with this aspect of OAS business.

Farmers, while plowing their fields, find many sites and artifacts. And often, after a heavy rain or flood, someone will call Brooks saying he's found a stone blade or a piece of old pottery. For the untrained, it's impossible to tell what is valuable and what isn't, which is why

Brooks encourages anyone finding anything to contact the OAS. Sites or artifacts more than 50 years old are worth recording and possible examination. "When you do the typical archaeological survey, it doesn't matter if it's a 1930 farmsite or a 5,000-year-old Indian settlement. Both are significant," Brooks said.

Details and photographs of each state site are kept at the OAS's offices on the north campus of the University of Oklahoma. The drafty old building that houses OAS has the look of a place Indiana Jones might frequent, when he wasn't in search of the holy grail—musty, well-worn about the

edges, with posters of various antiquities tacked on the wall. Wyckoff's office is papered with big photographs of Oklahoma landscapes, landscapes beautiful to a visitor for their vast vistas, but to Wyckoff for what he knows lies below the fields of grass or rock. There are old rules of thumb when it comes to searching for archaeological sites, Wyckoff says, looking fondly at a terrace of ground high above an Oklahoma stream, "And they work."

Dr. Rich Cifelli, too, works in Oklahoma's past. But not the past of land runs or Indian Territory or even centuries-old Native



Not-so-close ancient sites tie modern history with prehistory. In Roger Mills County, OU students excavate traces of a collapsed wall at the site of a 500-year-old farming village. Its inhabitants lived at about the same time as the Spanish explorer Coronado came onto the plains.

American settlements. As vertebrate paleontology curator for the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History in Norman, Cifelli's past begins in the Permian Age, a time some 250-300 million years ago. A time when reptiles took their first slither and amphibians their first crawl across Oklahoma.

"Oklahoma has one of the very best records in the world of early reptiles and amphibians," Cifelli said. "All along through central Oklahoma are sites of significance."

These creatures have tongue-twisting names like *Cotylorhynchus Romeri*, which, Cifelli said, was an early ancestor of the *Demetradon*, the familiar sailback lizard. In the 1930s, workers grading a road found the remains of a *Cotylorhynchus* outside of Norman. But all over Oklahoma, the remains of dinosaurs and their ancestors—those that didn't evolve into the fossil fuels of oil and natural gas—have been found. There are sites near Chickasha, Perry, Fort Sill, Waurika and others scattered around Tillman County.

Finding them isn't easy. Discoveries tend to be accidental.

"In the western states, you have a lot of barren plains and rock outcroppings," Cifelli said. "But here in Okla-

Oklahoma has more than 13,000 archaeological sites, and experts say that figure probably only reflects 5 percent to 10 percent of what's actually out there.

homa, most of the state is covered with vegetation. Places where bare rock is exposed are the places to find fossils."

Cifelli figures there are probably as many dinosaur remains in southeast Oklahoma as in Montana. Travel west just about as far as you can go in the

Oklahoma Panhandle and you'll come across Kenton, a town of some 21 people, three churches, one general store and a community building. It's a town famous for one thing—dinosaurs.

They were what J. Willis Stovall, the first director of the Museum of Natural History in Norman, was looking for when he first went to Kenton in 1931. A county road worker had discovered an unusual round rock that later proved to be a fragment of a dinosaur rib. Within a few years, Stovall was heading up one of the largest dinosaur-digging expeditions ever, one that would excavate the hulking remains of the *Brontosaurus*, the *Tyrannosaurus* and *Triceratops*. The project took seven years, employed dozens of Works Progress Administration laborers, left some 10 quarries in the ground around Kenton and added nearly 20,000 specimens to the OU collection.

But for nearly 50 years, no one has been exactly sure what Stovall collected. When the bones began arriving in Norman, Stovall had to scramble for

The Museum of Natural History: a chip off the ancient block

It is a collection that at once invokes wonder and awe, surprise and suspense, harmony and admiration. Yet if seeing were believing, the 5 million or more artifacts in the collection of the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History in Norman would not exist.

Because as it is, the massive assemblage of items, which stretch back some 400 million years, is scattered across the University of Oklahoma campus in eight buildings—mostly far from public view.

But don't blame museum officials. In the less than 5,000 square feet of exhibit space inside the museum, they've packed about 1,000 of the best pieces. "One thousand out of 5 million just makes no sense," said Peter B. Tirrell, the museum's assistant director. "That isn't to say that it all should be out there. But it still leaves thousands and thousands of items that should be."

But don't nix a trip to the museum just because you'll miss a few million artifacts. What's on display is well worth a visit. There are arm and thigh bones from dinosaurs and the skeleton of a prehistoric saber-toothed cat. There is the skeleton of a 10,000-year-old Columbian mammoth. And you can see one of the state's first residents, the 285-million-year-old *Cotylorhynchus Romeri*. Upstairs, you'll find several artifacts from the museum's sizeable and world-famous collection from the Spiro Mounds. Along with the expected arrow points and flint blades, museum officials have placed stone and shell beads, pendants, vases, pots and bowls. Pieces of shell are engraved with woodpeckers, dancers, eagles and hands. "The biggest problem that the museum has is space," Tirrell said. "The museum is just extremely cramped."

Millions of valuable items are stored in 50-year-old ROTC stables—horse barns that were never designed to protect the state's cultural and scientific treasures.

But there may be hope.

Early last year, the OU Board of Regents selected an area west of the OU Law Center as the site for a new museum building. The structure would also house the Oklahoma Archeological Survey and the Western History Collections, now



The 285-million-year-old remains of a reptile Cotylorhynchus.

housed in the basement of OU's Monnet Hall. The new building, estimated at 300,000 square feet, would provide about 50,000 square feet for exhibit space and offer a safe and secure storage area for the remaining artifacts, Tirrell said.

Yet getting funds for such a structure is another obstacle. By tradition, Tirrell said, university museums tend to be sleepy institutions, seldom receiving sizeable portions of school monies. But the OMNH hasn't been dozing. In recent years, Tirrell said, the museum has received about \$1 million in grants and staffers and students have published research works. The museum has put together successful traveling exhibits and education programs and lured its share of the tourism dollar. "We anticipate that with a new building, our attendance would go up five-, six- or seven-fold," Tirrell said. "We've predicted more than a half-million tourists a year."

With Interstate 35 just minutes from the OU campus, tour buses could easily make the museum a regular stop. "A new museum means tourist dollars," he added. "It could be as big as football. No, it could be bigger than football, because we're open nearly every day of the year."

The Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, 1335 Asp Ave., is open Tuesday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; weekends, 2-5 p.m.; and on home football game Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

—Andy Morgan

space, storing skeletons beneath the football stadium, in a vacant downtown store and in the former geology building. After WWII, the specimens, now numbering between 30,000 and 40,000, were moved to a temporary building on the south campus. And in 1984, they were left in an old dormitory. "I got here in 1986, and this collection was an abysmal mess," Cifelli said. "It had come in so quickly, it was never catalogued properly."

In late 1988, Cifelli began doing just that. With the aid of a two-year, \$150,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, he and his staff have

begun identifying and storing items collected nearly a half century ago. Today, dinosaur bones, some more than a foot wide and stretching 6 feet long, rest atop foam pallets that are stacked to the ceiling on steel shelves. Tiny bone fragments have been numbered, catalogued and stored in rows of new metal cabinets purchased with the grant money.

Among the highlights of the collection are a massive Triceratops skull and the remains of an Allosaurus, which is 40 feet long from nose to tail and rises to a height of 25 feet. There are two Acrocanthosaurus specimens. The odd

creature, known only to Oklahoma, has long spines running the length of its back.

Cifelli said amateur fossil hunters can usually find invertebrate specimens at places along Lake Eufaula's shoreline. Lately, Cifelli, while coordinating field projects from Montana to South America, has been snooping around southeastern Oklahoma for specimens. He examines test samples from rock outcroppings for microscopic fossils, a sometime indication of bigger specimens nearby.

"Where there's smoke," he said, "there's fire."



LARRY D. BROWN



Experienced members of the Oklahoma Archeological Society were asked to take part in a recent dig in Woods County. Those volunteers may be taking part in a history-changing event: proving the first North Americans were here more than twice as many years ago as is currently believed.

Archaeology attracts a spectrum of people—from the scholar to the outdoorsman to the person who simply likes to read about excavations. “Some people don’t like roughin’ it on the digs (and) are more interested in keeping up with research through publications,” explains Oklahoma Anthropological Society president Claude Long. “Other people love to surface collect.”

The Oklahoma Anthropological Society appreciates them all. Members pay annual dues of \$12 and learn about

the state’s past through a monthly newsletter. Twice a year, normally during the fall and spring, members go on society excavations along with the state’s leading archaeologists, such as Wyckoff or Brooks, both society members.

The society has chapters in six Oklahoma cities—Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Ponca City, McAlester, Muskogee and Lawton. “We have a lot of people from rural areas,” said Long. “They grow up on a farm and sometimes they’ll find stone artifacts—some tools, flint points,

whatever. They wondered why and where the artifacts came from and they end up in the society trying to find out.”

Members’ professions and occupations are also as diverse as the Oklahoma terrain the society explores—from carpenters and newspaper editors to ranchers and retired teachers. “When I was a little girl, I used to dig up bones in my back yard,” said Charlotte Gifford, the owner of her own Tulsa drafting business. But for years afterward, her interest in archaeology



stayed indoors, limited to reading about excavations in magazines.

"About 1985, there was a magazine article about an excavation in Oklahoma," Gifford said. "I read about it and my husband kicked me out of the house and said, 'Go on and go.'"

"I went and now he can't get me to stop. It kind of gets in your blood."

The more excavations you do, the better you become. And for the society's more experienced members, their skills have led to their being asked to participate in important OAS excavations. It was that way last fall at the Burnham site; there Wyckoff hand-picked many of those doing the dig-

ging. And no one had to be asked twice.

As for the story of the Burnham site, it is actually two. One began at least 26,000 years ago, when *Bison Latifrons*, an ancestor of today's buffalo, died alongside what was probably at that time a watering hole. The other story started in 1986, when rancher Keith Burnham, while bulldozing land for a new pond, discovered the bison's skull. There's still no pond on Burnham's land, but there's been a lot of careful digging in the last four years.

In October 1986, the OAS and two volunteers excavated the bison skull. And primarily for the benefit of a paleontologist looking for evidence of small mammals, some 2,000 pounds of the soil surrounding the skull also were scooped up, run through a water screen, bagged and taken to the OAS lab.

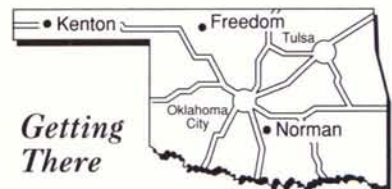
Six months later, Wyckoff was as interested in the contents of the soil as he was in the skull. While examining the bagged samples, a lab technician had discovered two fingernail-sized flakes of flint. The flakes, Wyckoff believes, were from resharpened tools used by humans who may have lived about the same time as the 26,000-year-old bison. So why the excitement? Until now, scientists have believed the first humans in North America were the Clovis people, who lived in New Mexico some 12,000 years ago.

In mid-1988, Wyckoff headed back to Woods County, armed with 27 volunteers and the hope of finding further evidence of man's early existence. The 14-day excavation uncovered several more flakes of flint, two broken tools and a smooth stone called a "cobble," a stone Wyckoff thinks was probably carried into the area by a human. Wyckoff submitted his findings to the National Geographic Society, hoping to obtain funding to finance further digging at the site. In August of 1989, he received a \$12,000 grant. Not as much as he wanted, but enough to finance a three-week dig that began in late September.

The latest dig revealed the bones of a prehistoric horse, the vertebrae of the ancient bison, the remains of a mammoth or mastodon and a bone from a bear's paw, which appeared to have cut marks on it from a primitive tool.

But to substantiate the possibility of the first North American being discovered in northwest Oklahoma, Wyckoff needs tools and flakes of flint, not animal bones. Which is why this spring, he'll probably be back in Woods County. "This is really controversial, really controversial," Wyckoff said. "It's kind of scary in terms of archaeology and what it could mean...Right now, from what I've seen, northwest Oklahoma has the best chance of turning up evidence of early man. Oklahoma could really make a contribution to the existence of people in North America." 

Andy Morgan, formerly of Oklahoma, now writes for Oklahoma Today from St. Louis, Missouri, where he works for Southwestern Bell.



Members of the Oklahoma Anthropological Society participate mainly in digs of prehistoric sites, but society president Claude Long says members also get to do historical archaeology. For instance, OAS members excavated the area around the settlers store at Fort Towson. For information about the society call Long at (405) 942-3764.

In the Black Mesa, two couples, both with long ties to the area, offer guided tours of the wonders of the Panhandle. Truman Tucker, the 84-year-old unofficial historian of the Panhandle, and his wife, Leona, can be reached at (405) 261-7423. The telephone number for Bobbie and Jane Apple is (405) 261-7413.





COWBOY

Poets

By Jeanne M. Devlin
Photographs
by Allen Russell

City slickers to housewives may try to pass themselves off as cowboy poets, but here's how to recognize the men and women who truly know what a salt lick is for.

Gene Waters sits down on the cushy brown sofa with all the grace of a newborn calf trying to struggle to its feet in soft grass. Hoisting his 6-foot frame onto a saddle would be an easier task but an old cowboy has to make do. He is a big man, a man's man. His one room in a small house on a quiet Tulsa street makes that perfectly clear. In a city house chock full of feminine doodads and wispy colors, Gene Water's den is all country: brown and solid, decorated with Winchester rifles and Indian pillows and a decouped copy of *The Cowboy's Prayer*.

In his caramel leather vest, darker brown Dan Post boots and Resistol cowboy hat (politely in his hand, not on his head), he looks as if he just returned from checking the herd. A

Mel Guenther of Bartlesville was raised on a spread in Kansas. He writes poems about frontier characters with names like "Big Hairy Mary" and "Whiskey Breath Johnson."

book of poems, written by him, sits nearby. He is what you would expect a cowboy poet to look like, but, maybe more importantly, he's the real thing.

"I rode fence, worked cattle and fought prairie fires for the Chapman-Barnard ranch back in the '50s," confirms Waters. He's also shipped cattle from 4:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., day after hot summer day and more than once considered himself lucky to earn \$85 a month, a slot in the bunkhouse and all he could eat. "They provided the horse, and you provided the saddle," recalls Waters.

Even with hindsight, it seems to him a fair deal.

"I grew up on Zane Grey and Charles Russell," explains Waters. "I always wanted to be a cowboy and I got to be one and I never left it, I guess."

He chews on that revelation for a moment and decides it holds water. "Everyone wants to be a cowboy," he drawls, matter-of-factly. "And I was."





Ron Doherty, 61, doesn't write cowboy poetry, but he's kept many a classic cowboy poem alive by putting them to memory and reciting them for others. A cowboy through and through, Doherty says he'd go without eating before he'd live without a horse.

These days that's saying something. Not since John Travolta climbed aboard a mechanical bull in the movie "Urban Cowboy" have so many souls donned hats and boots with the hope of being mistaken for a cowpoke. Only this time around, it isn't enough to tell the ladies you can ride a bronc or fire a brand. Now they want to be known as cowboy poets, too.

"A friend of mine said, 'It's amazing the number of born-again cowboys,'" marvels Guy Logsdon, a Tulsa folklorist. "And he's right. People are coming out of the woodwork. There have been hundreds of thousands of closet cowboys, I guess, and now they're revealing their identities in order to read their poetry."

The irony of this isn't lost on Logsdon. A man who has built a career on studying, and writing about, cowboys and their songs and poetry, Logsdon can remember a day when

cowboy poets were a rare commodity. In 1986, when organizers of the world-famous Elko, Nevada, cowboy poetry

SOLITUDE

Part of the beauty of this desert wilderness is the single silence that stretches from horizon to horizon. God must come here too to be alone.

— Mel Guenther

gathering asked him to round up some Oklahoma cowboy poets, Logsdon was stumped by the request. He had to resort to stopping cowboys on the street and running ads in *Farmer Stockman* magazine. The result: one poem from a man named Gene Waters.

Unbeknownst to anyone else—his wife included—Waters had written

poems for 30 years, ever since the day as a young cowhand he was overcome with grief at the death of the man he called Mister Barnard. "I felt something was ending (with the rancher's death)," Waters recalls, "and it felt better to write it down."

Secretly, he'd written poems ever since. Far from prolific, Waters has maybe written 50 poems in three decades. "Every month to two months," says Waters, "well, something, a line hits ya or you remember something. It usually happens to me on the road and I pull over in my pickup and put it on a scrap of paper."

When Logsdon went by to see if Waters' city address was actually the home of an authentic cowboy poet, it took him only a matter of moments to discern why the poem he'd read had rung with the distinctive twang of a man who had spent time in the saddle: Waters had not only cowboied on the

famous Chapman-Barnard ranch, he'd owned his own 400-acre spread. Logsdon sent Waters' name off to Elko, and Oklahoma had its first official contemporary cowboy poet.

It looked to be a one-man profession for awhile.

That, of course, was before the annual gathering of cowboy poets in Elko became an international media event. Before the first time Waddie Mitchell, a sagebrush poet from Jiggs, Nevada, went on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson" and hogtied the audience so thoroughly that Carson never got around to introducing another guest. And before the first annual gathering of Oklahoma cowboy poets drew some 30 sages and an audience of 1,000-plus at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City last spring.

That was also before folks came to realize what Shorty Barnett, a former rodeo cowboy and now a cowboy-hat maker in Oklahoma, has always known: That—fakers aside—almost as many cowboys write poetry as ride horses. "Every cowboy I ever knew has written short stories or poems," says Shorty, a mite defensively. "It's just a part of the cowboy way of life."

Until recently, however, it was off-limits as a topic of conversation. Shorty's closest friends from his rodeo circuit days, or with whom he fixed windmills on the prairies of northeastern Oklahoma, might know the cowboy scratched out verses on a pad of paper kept in the glove box of his pickup, but chances are no one else did. Not even his girl.

"There's just something not too macho about writing poetry," confides Jerry Nine, a 35-year-old cattlebuyer from Laverne, who despite having published a book of his poetry last year still finds himself emphasizing the word "cowboy" when folks ask if he writes poems.

"Cowboy poetry sounds a little more manly, I guess."

Just how many cowboys write poems, though, never ceases to amaze Logsdon. "I know of twenty to thirty

(cowboy poets) in the state," says Logsdon. "But I look back and I realize I have no idea who does or doesn't write. I was visiting with a friend and

COWBOY

*He sat tall and straight in the saddle
His horse, quick as a cat
The pride in his calling, all could see
From his spurs to his tall-crowned hat.*

*His hard twist rope was "tied hard"
No "dally" man was he
If he tied on to something
He stayed, til it broke free.*

*Cattle and land he always knew,
Why a buzzard flies.
He knew what makes a coyote howl
And the blue of prairie skies.*

*Perhaps his breed is dying out
But everyone's his kin
Whoever worked a branding fire
Or brought the Remuda in.*

*The sweat, the dust, the summer heat
The winter cold and snow
What keeps a sane man doing this
City folks will never know.*

*I heard a saying once
And it's true, of course
"The inside of a man improves
On the outside of a horse."*

— Gene Waters

he told me about the death of an old rodeo cowboy we'd both known for years. "You know he wrote poetry, too," my friend said. I said, "No. I had no idea."

What makes it hard to get a handle on the number of cowboy poets, Logsdon explains, is that a cowboy poet doesn't have to write poetry every day. "He may write one every year or one every three years," says Logsdon. "There's no set number you have to write before it can be said that you're a

cowboy poet."

If the field has any rite of passage, cowboys say it would be having a book of your poems in print. "It's getting to the point," cowboy poet Fred Olds told the Hall of Fame gathering last March, "where a cowboy has to be ready to show where he's been published before he can get hired on."

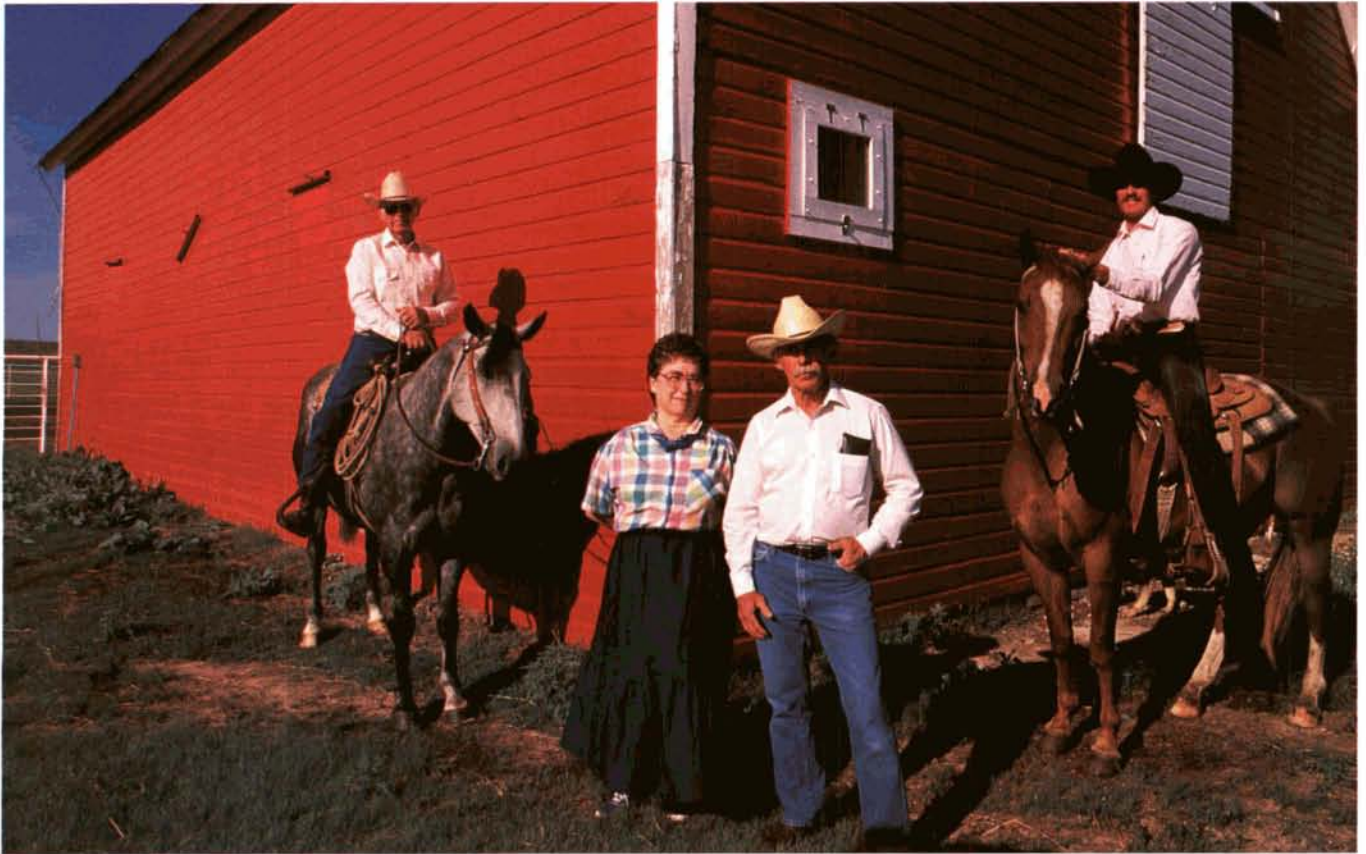
In fact, there's always been some truth to that. Cowboy poetry has existed in the United States since at least the 1880s—the first year cowboy verse began appearing in newspapers and magazines. Its roots are grounded in an industry that required men to fend for themselves for days at a stretch on a lonely prairie, but stopped short of begrudging them what forms of entertainment they could devise. As a result, some read. Others told stories. Still others recited poems. In the end, a great many began to write and recite their own material. And what they chose to write about was what they knew: the cowboy life. "No occupation has had as many poems written about it," says Logsdon. "Can you imagine a group of IBM executives gathered together to read poetry written about their work? It just doesn't happen. The same holds true for any other occupation, except cowboys."

Logsdon contends that the cowboy world has been maligned by people who don't like and don't understand cowboys, people who can't understand why a man would rather know the freedom of drifting from ranch to ranch and the feel of a good horse under him rather than the security of a 9-to-5 job and a steady paycheck. "The misconception," he says, "is that cowboys are not well-educated, when in reality cowboys are some of the best-read people."

"They read poetry."

Not surprisingly then, he adds, cowboys are often harsh literary critics. "The classics are well-worn in bunkhouses," says Logsdon. "Cowboys won't read Louis L'Amour because it's so unreal. They like to read what they know to be at least semi-accurate."

Shorty Barnett says what he's seen



With four cowboy poets to its credit, Laverne (population 1,563) may well be the cowboy poet capital of Oklahoma. From left, Marvin Carnagey, Barbara Bockelman, Lowell Long and Jerry Nine. Nine's book is aptly entitled, "Cattlebuyers and Cattlepoop—By the Pound or By the Scoop."

through the years bears out Logsdon's observations. "A lot of people think cowboys aren't educated—that they're high-school dropouts," Barnett says, "but the majority of cowboys have at least a high-school education and a lot on ranches have bachelor's and doctorates. This isn't a menial way of life. It's a way of life men choose over others."

Yet as helicopters, four-wheel drive trucks and corporate ranching have changed the world of the cowboy, the definition of a cowboy poet has changed, too. Not easily, however. "The general idea," says Logsdon, "is that a cowboy poet is a person who derives his livelihood out of the 'cow-horse-ag' world, which makes room for people who sell feed or fertilizer as well as former cowboys who now work as roughnecks in order to make a living."

Cowboy poetry itself deals with the experiences that come from the cow-horse world, he says.

As cowboy poetry moves from the bunkhouse to the stage, any definition is suspect, observes Mel Guenther, a Bartlesville cowboy poet who was raised in the country but has always made his living as a banker. When he journeyed last year to Prescott, Arizona, for a gathering of cowboy poets, he found himself all but ostracized by the men and women who still make their living by hauling themselves into a saddle every day. A man who agrees a cowboy poet should live close to the cowboy world, Guenther nonetheless believes the siren of the sagebrush poet doesn't emanate from a saddle or a stockyard. "It's in here," says the tall, handsome man, thumping his breast. "It's something buried in ya way down deep."

Logsdon agrees. "There are many poets, cowboy poets, who put on a three-piece suit on Monday and wear it until Friday and (they) are cowboys

Saturday and Sunday," he says. "They have cattle and they work them on weekends."

"How many head do you have to run to be a cowboy?" asks Logsdon. "The answer is, 'there is no answer.'"

Talk to any cowboy poet and you'll hear the same. "A cowboy can tell if a guy's spent some time in the saddle," says Ron Doherty, a cowboy poetry reciter from Skiatook. "It's instinct, I guess. You can tell by the very words and the things that are important to him."

Poetry written by cowboys tends to be frank and straightforward, a mirror of the cowboy himself. No fancy symbolism here. If the cowboy poet writes about an uncomfortable saddle or a vengeful horse, he's not secretly trying to take a shot at his bad marriage or debt-ridden Third World countries. "You call it the way you see it," says Waters. "You say, 'the guy got

thrown.' You don't sit and analyze what happened. It's very straightforward and you say what you mean.

"Honest," Waters says. "It's honest."

Chances are it will also rhyme and, more times than not, no matter how serious the subject, it will end on a wry note. Cowboys like their humor.

It may all sound very simple —poetry for the common man—but cowboy poetry shares the four-lined ballad form of rhymed couplets with nineteenth century poets Robert Service and Rudyard Kipling. It also relies heavily on the language of the West, where a herd of horses is a *remuda*, a loose hemp rope a *seago* and a buckskin-colored horse, a Dun. "You can tell the ones who've cattled," says Nine, a cattle-buyer himself. "There're certain words a guy in the business would use that another guy wouldn't."

While this makes it difficult for an urban cowboy to pass himself off as the real McCoy, it has also tended to limit the audience for cowboy poetry to the kind of people who know what a jack-leg outfit is (a poorly run ranch). Jerry Nine and Ron Doherty still find themselves reciting poetry more times than not before the local cattlemen's association or at the annual county co-op meeting, but as sagebrush poets like Waddie Mitchell, Wally McRae of Montana and cowboy humorist Baxter Black of Colorado gain increasing notoriety on National Public Radio and TV talkshows, that's begun to change.

Nine says he and three other cowboy poets who call Laverne (population 1,563) home are now called upon regularly by the local librarian to recite their verse. And, last spring Gene Waters was asked to bring his book of cowboy poetry and himself down to Gilcrease and to Tulsa's annual Mayfest to join other locally published poets. "If a resurgence nationwide should happen in poetry it will be because of cowboy poets," predicts Guy Logsdon, "not because of the college professors, the quote 'serious poets' or the Eastern critics."

That doesn't mean being a cowboy



Gene Waters of Tulsa always wanted to be a cowboy. Now he's a cowboy poet, too.

poet doesn't still require a thick skin. It does. At Mayfest, Waters found himself sitting with two or three well-recognized lady poets whose books of

poems had been published, "while I'd printed mine myself."

Curious about the big Westerner with the cowboy boots, the verses that rhymed and the stories of rowdy cowboy poetry gatherings out West, the ladies politely asked Waters if he'd encountered any famous poets at Elko. "I told them we were the most famous poets we knew," Waters recalls. "Heck, I wouldn't know a famous poet from a bale of hay."

Yet there are famous cowboy poets in the making. Debra Moore, development officer at the Metropolitan Library System of Oklahoma County, says she has never been too interested in cowboys or western things, but after seeing Baxter Black, a veterinarian turned full-time cowboy poet, on "The Tonight Show" a couple of years ago, she knew she'd found the library's perfect contribution to the Centennial of the '89 Land Run. "He was wonderful," recalls Moore. "More importantly, even if you didn't like Western things he was wonderful."

On the spot, she decided to apply for a grant to showcase Oklahoma cowboy poets at the first of what she hoped would become an annual gathering, an Oklahoma version of Elko. "I remember thinking, 'Anyone would really enjoy this if they listened to it,'" Moore says. "But as it got closer to it I began to worry. They do (enjoy it) elsewhere, but golly gee, will they here. I was amazed. Little kids, senior citizens came and they were not there just for Baxter (Black). It was the local poets."

"I watched people," Moore adds. "They were enthralled, captivated. I was never so proud of an event."

By day's end, she knew the Oklahoma Cowboy Poetry Gathering would become an annual event. Somehow, she had hit on a very Oklahoma passion. "We had people who just wanted to continue it right then. I had people ask, 'Will they be here tomorrow?' and 'When will you do it again?' They didn't want to wait a year."

Those least surprised by the outcome were the poets themselves. Ron

THE HORSE OF COURSE

*Son was all for the modern things
A tractor and a trailer too,
We must mechanize he said to his dad.
It's the only thing to do.*

*Get rid of the slow old horses now.
No need for a hack to ride.
But his dad looked sad and
thoughtful too*

The horse was his joy and pride.

*This mechanical age it has no soul
No thought of ought but speed.
Yes the modern machinery does
the work*

But the horse is a friend indeed.

*You like new-fangled things I know.
But tell me truly son
Have you ever heard of a single
machine*

Producing a baby one.

— R.M. Hill

REINCARNATION

"What does reincarnation mean?"

A cowpoke ast his friend.

His pal replied, "It happens when

Yer life has reached its end.

They comb yer hair, and warsh yer neck,

And clean yer fingernails,

And lay you in a padded box

Away from life's travails.

"The box and you goes in a hole,

That's been dug into the ground.

Reincarnation starts in when

Yore planted 'neath a mound.

Them clods melt down, just like yer box,

And you who is inside.

And then yore just beginnin' on

Yer transformation ride.

"In a while the grass'll grow

Upon yer rendered mound.

Til some day on yer moldered grave
A lonely flower is found.

And say a hoss should wander by

And graze upon this flower

That once wuz you, but now's become

Yer vegetative bower.

"The posey that the hoss done ate

Up, with his other feed,

Makes bone, and fat, and muscle

Essential to the steed.

But some is left that he can't use

And so it passes through,

And finally lays upon the ground.

This thing, that once wuz you.

"Then say, by chance, I wanders by

And sees this upon the ground,

And I ponders, and I wonders at,

This object that I found.

I thinks of reincarnation,

Of life, and death, and such,

And come away concludin': Slim,

You ain't changed, all that much."

— Wally McRae

Doherty, a bowlegged man who has cowboied around the world from his native Australia to the plains of Canada to his present 20-acre spread near Skiatook, says a man who could recite a good poem has always been in demand, at least at stockcamps. "We might have a record player in camp," he says, "but chances are we'd only have one record. The cowboys would quickly tire of listening to the same song over and over, but it's funny, sitting around the campfire they'd happily listen to the same story or poem over and over."

Doherty, who says "I would like to be able to write poetry but it's something that would not come easily to me," quickly learned he had an ear for a good poem. And, a knack for reciting them. "You have to be able to put it over," he says of his calling as a cowboy poetry reciter. "You have to come over good for people to enjoy it."

Doherty, who is also a trick roper, says he was discovered by Guy Logsdon while the two were standing in line at a Tulsa allergy clinic. Logsdon asked the blue-jeaned cowpoke with the weathered face and Aussie accent if he by chance knew any Australian cowboy poetry. Doherty quickly answered, "Yes."

"Then he asked, 'Can you recite it? And I said, 'Boy, yeah, I love it.'"

"Then recite me some," Logsdon demanded.

Right there as Logsdon waited for his allergy shot and for Doherty to pay his bill, the good-natured cowboy began reciting the classic Australian poem, "The Man from Snowy River." Once started, like a mustang bolting at the sight of man, Doherty couldn't be stopped. He recited and recited and recited. One cowboy classic after another, poems he had written on bits of paper and wheedled out of older cowboys over some 50 odd years as a cowboy in the bush.

Looking back on that encounter, Doherty grows embarrassed at this boldness. "I didn't start to recite in front of people (cowboys don't count)," he says, "until that day."

He has since come to believe that "most people don't like real long poems," but most do appreciate a little humor. Still there are exceptions to the rule. Ron Doherty has recited "The Man from Snowy River" probably more than 200 times.

And as excited as Guy Logsdon gets about the surging numbers of cowboy poets in Oklahoma, he gets equally revved up by the likes of Doherty. For it is men, such as Doherty, who will help keep the best of cowboy poetry alive for another generation.

If all people do is recite their own poetry, Logsdon explains, the best the world can expect to end up with is a mix of good and bad poems that surface briefly and then die with their author. It takes a Ron Doherty to make certain that classic cowboy poems by greats such as Curly Fletcher, Jack Thorp and Charles Badger Clark, Jr., endure. 

Jeanne M. Devlin is managing editor of Oklahoma Today. Allen Russell is a photographer with Profiles West, Buena Vista, Colorado.



Sagebrush poets Waddie Mitchell and Baxter Black, both frequent guests on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson," will be headliners for the second annual Oklahoma Cowboy Poetry Gathering set for April 28, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

Mitchell and Black will be joined by Jack Prelutsky, who has written 25 books of children's verse, and a host of Oklahoma cowboy poets. Cowboy poets wishing to perform at the gathering should call Guy Logsdon at (918) 743-2171.

Pre-registration for the gathering, which is presented by the Metropolitan Library System of Oklahoma County, is \$3, \$5 at the door. For more information, call (405) 235-0571.



The Wild Onion Dinner

A Rite of Spring for Native Americans

By Barbara Palmer

On this Saturday morning in early spring, the sky is blue and clear, but the breeze still carries a faintly sharp edge. Behind the Washington County Fairgrounds building, tires crunch gravel and engines whine as cars back up to dispatch their early morning loads at the kitchen door. A multitude of tubs and cookers, bulging grocery bags and huge 20-pound sacks of flour are carried into the warm kitchen, where the smell of brewing coffee fills the air.

Given the beauty of the day and the pleasure of the tasks that lie before her, Pat Donnell has only one small complaint: "I wish people would stop calling this the *Wild Indian Onion Dinner*."

For 38 years, the Bartlesville Indian Women's Club's wild onion dinner has made feasting on wild onions scrambled with eggs a rite of spring.

The custom of gathering wild onions is a familiar one to "most anyone who has grown up around country creeks," says club member Fern Dugan. For the members of the Bartlesville Indian Women's Club, who come from 18 tribes and Washington, Tulsa, Nowata and Osage counties, the annual dinner is a common ground. The majority of their members are Delaware and Cherokee, with fond memories of dig-

ging for wild onions as children.

The season in which sufficiently delicate wild onions can be found is brief—from March to early May. As with any valued ritual, the gathering of wild onions has generated a litany of folk wisdom. The best places to go to dig wild onions are in bottomland, around old trees or a creek bed. The best time to go in search of them is right after a soaking rain, when the earth is soft, lessening the likelihood of a shovel

(or better, an old kitchen spoon) mangling the delicate roots. And the best possible company for a wild onion digging expedition is someone like Fern, who has a history with wild onions.

"We didn't think it had got started in the spring until we had wild onions and eggs," remembers Fern, whose grandmother was a full-blood Cherokee midwife. "And sassafras tea." Her grandmother claimed the sassafras root was a blood thinner.



Club members work together so well, says Bea Freeland, "because we all love each other." From left, Elgia Bryan, Eunice Bonnett, Bea and Vickie Pannell grate cabbage and carrots for cole slaw.

Dugan grew up on a farm a few miles east of Bartlesville, near Hogshooter Creek (so named because local residents butchered hogs there). The farm was self-sustaining; Fern's family ate hominy made from dried corn, ham and bacon from hogs they had butchered and dandelion greens they had gathered. In the summer, they picked peaches from their orchard and canned them. In the fall, they looked for wild blackberries on the hillsides.

The dinner's menu mirrors those days: Ham, onions and eggs, cole slaw and fry bread served with butter and honey, topped off with peach or blackberry cobbler and washed down with pitchers of sassafras tea and endless cups of coffee.

A visitor who attended the dinner 30 years ago will be pleased to find that almost nothing has changed. The hum of expectant conversation still echoes off cement floors before dinner; tables and cobbler pans and serving spoons bear the marks of long service—even the old 4-H pictures of champion calves look distantly familiar.

The dinner began more than 40 years ago as a social thing, Fern says, something she and her friends liked to do together. As more and more people began to ask if they could attend, the women decided the dinner might be a good way to earn money for the club.

In the early years, the women cooked lunch on a weekday in the basement of the downtown Bartlesville YWCA, where the good smells wafted up the steps and into the street and pulled passersby inside. The dinner has long outgrown the need for such aromatic advertising. At the dinner's zenith, the club sold tickets to more than 1,000 diners. The more manageable 600 tickets sold now go fast.

The dinner's size makes it impractical (and virtually impossible) for members themselves to gather the hundreds of pounds of onions needed. Suppliers strategically located throughout Washington and Osage counties search out their own secret places and sell the onions to the club. Dugan's

favorite spot is a bit of highway right-of-way a few miles south of Ochelata. A late spring, like last year's, causes members weeks of consternation.

Two or three nights before the dinner, members gather in someone's kitchen to wash the piles and piles of onions. And talk.

Wild Onions and Eggs

2 pounds or more wild onions
18 eggs, beaten
Bacon drippings
Salt and pepper, optional

Gather onions and clean.

Cut them in 1-inch lengths, using the whole onion, except for the very top.

Fry them in bacon drippings until they soften a bit and add 18 beaten eggs. Cook until set. Salt and pepper to taste.

This recipe for six will make quite large servings, says Bea Freeland. There won't be a bit left over.

Though members of the Indian Women's Club work as engineers and entrepreneurs, drive Suburbans and travel to Europe for summer vacations, during the preparation for the dinner they slip seamlessly into the old ways. To be an older person is to have status, says club president Vickie Pannell.

Bea Freeland coordinates the kitchen work with grandmotherly authority. There are 100 dozen eggs to be cracked and beat, mounds of cabbages and carrots to be shredded and pots and pots of hominy to be cooked. "We all work together so well," says Bea, "because we all love each other."

Leona Shipley holds sway over the making of Indian fry bread, her dignity unaltered by a light powdering of flour on her forehead. "I've even got flour in my shoes," she says, without stopping her gentle kneading of the flour, milk and baking powder dough. Leona's

helpers emulate her motions and hear this advice. "The more you make it, the better it is." By that measure, the fry bread at the dinner should be, and is, superlative. Leona has been making fry bread for 40 years.

The dinner has spawned another, more personal tradition. Like her mother before her, Mary Crow brings lunch to the kitchen workers, serving *sulus seekon*, a Delaware dish of meat and tiny dumplings, and mahogany cake from her mother's recipe.

The lunch is a brief respite for club members, and last year, a necessity. It was the only meal the kitchen workers got that day.

The crowd was an especially appreciative one. Women wearing contemporary and authentic Indian dress hurried back and forth to the kitchen, carrying platters of fry bread and bowls of hominy and slaw. By the time the last diner pushed away his paper plate, there wasn't a bit of food left in the kitchen. Club members joked, "Let's go out for pizza." 

Assistant editor for Oklahoma Today, Barbara Palmer first attended the wild onion dinner as a Bartlesville teenager. She found the 1989 dinner to be as good as her memory of it.



Getting There

The 38th annual Bartlesville Indian Women's Club's wild onion and egg dinner will be held March 31 at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Dewey. For ticket information, call Vicki Pannell, (918) 333-5706. Spring wild onion dinners are also a tradition at Indian Methodist Churches, including the New Hope Indian Methodist Church in Dewey, (918) 534-1631; Tulsa Indian Methodist Church in Tulsa, (918) 834-1956; and the Mary Lee Clark United Methodist Indian Church in Oklahoma City, (405) 670-4830.



WEEKENDER

Roughing it in the Wichitas

Camping at Charon's Garden is beauty at its wildest and most remote

By Jane Beckman

In Greek mythology it was Charon, the grisly and morose old ferryman, whose job it was to transport the souls of the dead across the icy River Styx to Hades. In the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge 5,723 acres of bare, wind-savaged peaks towering over dry rocky streambeds and boulder-strewn canyons are set aside as wilderness.

RICHARD SMITH

They call this area Charon's Garden. The garden of death.

"It can be a very dangerous area," says Tom Westmoreland, chief ranger for the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, "but they don't call it that because so many people have died in there. They call it that because it's so rugged...some boulders are the size of a house, some the size of a car...very few trees or grass grow back there."

It is a roughness that repels as much as it attracts. Less hardy souls avoid the area, but others, particularly people who backcountry camp, are drawn by the wild beauty of the area and the isolation. "The majority of backcountry campers," Westmoreland explains, "want to get away from people. And you can do that here."

Small compared to the sprawling wilderness of the Rocky Mountains or the Cascades, the portion of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge known as the Charon's Garden Wilderness Area still manages to provide space enough so that campers are more likely to awaken to a buffalo nuzzling them



Little Post Oak Falls in Charon's Garden is nearly always running, but spring rains send water spilling over these falls and plummeting dramatically over nearby Post Oak Falls as well.

in the face than the sight of another human bathing at Little Post Oak Falls.

By day, anyone can explore Charon's Garden. Beginning at 9 each morning, hikers set off, sturdy boots on feet, staffs in hand, canteens slung over shoulders. But at 7 p.m. the gates clang shut on the Sunset parking area. Only twice each week (Monday-Wednesday and Friday-Sunday) 10 people are permitted three days and two nights camping in Charon's Garden. "This past year, 555 people got permits," says Westmoreland.

Rock climbers, backpackers and backcountry campers from Dallas and Ft. Worth, Texas, to Oklahoma City clamor for the overnight permits. What has kept the No Vacancy sign from constantly flashing, Westmoreland says, is the area's distinction as an insider's secret. Only those bold enough to explore this wilderness have been in a position to tell anyone else about it.

For in the best of circumstances, backcountry camping carries an element of risk. The sport requires a camper to carry in (and out) everything he will need for survival—from food to first aid kits to sleeping gear to a sterno stove. Open fires aren't allowed in Charon's Garden. No blow dryers. No ice chests. No picnic tables. None of the man-made amenities usually available to campers. Once in, the camper must fend for himself—help is a hike, not a holler, away.

Eccentricities of geography and climate work to make Charon's Garden a greater challenge for campers than many wilderness areas of the Far West. Weather, says Jack Dodd of Cache, is one of the biggest unknowns. "From fall till spring so many little fronts blow in." Rain makes those lichen on the rocks slick and dangerous.

Temperatures can drop abruptly leaving a camper without sufficiently warm clothing. And Charon's Garden is infested with rattlesnake dens. One spring camping trip, Dodd recalls, he picked up a rock. "The next thing I knew, a rattlesnake struck my boot."

It can seem at times as if the area is

fraught with risks. Weather. Animals. Even the landscape itself poses dangers. The very boulders and soaring cliffs that inspire climbers and hikers have also been known to send them scurrying away, like yelping pups. More than one person has suffered a bad fall when the weathered rock on which he was climbing broke away.

To make matters worse, people become disoriented in the canyons.

***"There's that spirit of
adventure you feel
when you pack
everything on your
back and take off."***

Hikers are told to carry a compass, a good topographical map. And water. For in Charon's Garden the availability of water ranges from scarce to nonexistent. When heavy rains do gush over Post Oak Falls and into the usually empty creek beds, the water they bring is bitter to the tongue.

George Durham, a Lawton man who has camped deep in the High Sierras of Nevada, finds the challenges offset the rigors of camping in Charon's Garden. "There's that spirit of adventure you feel when you pack everything on your back and take off," he says.

"The first thing you notice is no litter," he adds. "Where you camp the ground doesn't have that barren, hard-as-concrete look. There's no sign of someone being there ahead of you."

Because of its protection under the Wilderness Act of 1964, Charon's Garden in the 1990s is little changed from the time the Apache, Kiowa and Comanche first knew it. The reddish granite mountains loom against the sky just as they did when the artist George Catlin viewed them in 1834. The same fiery scenery exists that entranced Capt. Randolph March on an expedition to the headwaters of Red River in the 1850s and, 50 years later, the rough-

riding president Theodore Roosevelt on a Wichita Mountains wolf hunt.

Coyotes, buffalo, longhorn cattle all roam free in Charon's Garden. Campers can climb Elk Mountain or explore the rock rooms created ages ago when gigantic boulders tumbled off the mountain top, forming a natural shelter at the bottom. Campers can also hunt for mine shafts—the one human intrusion on the landscape—dug early in this century during a brief gold and silver rush.

No matter the time of year, people find their way here. "The colder it is, the better they like it," say refuge personnel who handle permit requests.

Still no season is quite as inviting as spring in Charon's Garden. The wind blows fresh across the mountains. The sun warms the time-worn granite, and the moss and lichens come to life. Seasonal rains send silver ribbons of water down Post Oak Falls. Wildflowers bloom in profusion. Little streambeds are outlined in pink blossoms. And young tufts of grass sprout around the rocks. Birds sing among the new leaves dressing the wind-gnarled oaks.

In spring, the old ferryman's garden resembles not so much the back yard of Hades as a little plot of Paradise. ☐

Jane Beckman is a freelance writer living in Walters.



Camping reservations for Charon's Garden are on a first-come, first-served basis. Request camping permit forms and regulations by writing Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, P.O. Box 448, Cache, OK 73527, or calling (405) 429-3222. Permits are issued no more than 90 days in advance and there is a \$2 processing fee.

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is 8 miles west of Lawton on U.S. 62.

Taking on the Arts Festival

The adventure of four small boys and one very nervous pop

By Thom Hunter

Touch it," the artist said, gently pushing the fragile, delicately textured, perfect piece of pottery toward Patrick's pudgy fingers. "It's okay."

"It is not okay. Don't even think about it," I said.

I couldn't hide my panic as sweat beads broke out on my forehead. Was taking my four boys to Oklahoma City's annual Festival of the Arts a big mistake? Was my lofty idea of exposing them to man's creativity going to end with the crash of that creativity on concrete?

I stood threateningly with one hand on Patrick's arm and the other on my wallet.

"You touch that. I buy it. And your festival days are over," I said. "Broken clay is not a pretty sight, and that piece could absorb your allowance for a decade."

Patrick stood there, mischievously poised, shooting glances back and forth between his frantic father and the peaceful potter.

"Dare ya'," whispered a voice behind us.

"Double dare," said another.

"Double, double dare," said a third.

"Go on. Do it."



Oklahoma City's Spring Festival of the Arts consistently ranks among the top ten festivals across the country, bringing out art lovers (and their parents) by the thousands.

The voices were behind me, but it was the eyes in front of me that spoke the loudest. Staring calmly over slightly bent wire-rimmed glasses, the incredibly calm potter pushed on, unaware that doom and destruction were bound to descend.

"Art, to be truly understood, must be experienced through whatever senses are most keenly developed," he said. "Surely, sir, you realize that in one so small, the sense of touch is tops."

"Surely," I replied.

With those words the artist brushed away my well-rehearsed, professionally delivered, perfectly polished parental parking lot speech.

"Touch it," I said, weakly. And I closed my eyes.

I figure if the 1990 festival will be

the 24th in a row, and if the festival constantly ranks as one of the top 10 in the United States, it can surely survive our annual visits. What damage can one clumsy dad and four frisky boys do, right? After all, there are some 4,000 volunteers watching over the more than 120 Art Plaza artists, not to mention the 42 craftsmen in the Craft Colony and the 2,000-plus performers who populate the festival's four outdoor stages. Sponsored by the Arts Council of Oklahoma City, the festival grows larger each year.

I was confident we could handle ourselves as admirers of fine art, but just in case, I prudently scoped out the place. I wasn't disappointed. Someone had prepared for my brood and the thousands of other youngsters who had been brought here by parents and grandparents yearning to help develop artistic appreciation in children whose cultural growth had been stunted by hours in front of televisions and video-game screens.

"Daddy, let's go in there," said Donovan, pointing to a tent with a sign much to my liking. According to the sign, I could leave the boys there and

they would be cared for by "creative" adults. The catch: I would have to return in a relatively short time.

For a buck each, children ages 3 to 12 can spend 45 minutes creating "vegetable people," wood sculptures, stencil art ... pieces you can then take with you or leave behind at your own discretion. Warning: vegetable people taken home and left on the fireplace mantle begin swelling first and smelling later.

I started giving warnings to the workers as our boys filed in, but the adults assured me they knew boys would be boys and that they had seen it all. I just chuckled. I knew they hadn't. When I returned 45 minutes later my boys sallied forth with potato people, bolo ties and some art I intended to learn to appreciate later. The workers were smiling even bigger than when we'd arrived. I didn't ask any questions.

With Russell in the lead we hustled on over to the Creation Station to add our touch to the larger than life outdoor sculpture being created on the lawn where Oklahoma City began 100 years ago as a tent city.

While adults collapsed on the cool grass, youngsters pondered where to tie their strips of cloth, working together to create a one-of-a-kind piece I was glad to visit but wouldn't want in the backyard.

Zachary by now was hungry. Like any good father I had slipped away while the boys were in the Art Field for cheese strudel and a side of Strawberries Newport. Unable to admit to such gluttony, I joined them for hot dogs at Mustard's Last Stand, followed by some low-cal frozen yogurt.

Looking at Patrick's mustard-slathered face another idea occurred to me. "Let's go to the face-painting booth," I suggested. There festival artists were painting sweet hearts, flowers and rainbows on sweet little children's faces. "I want a Tyrannosaurus Rex," said Russell.

The artist didn't even flinch.

The arts festival is a sprawling affair

that encroaches on the edge of the Myriad Gardens. Finding ourselves so near the Crystal Bridge, we decided to check it out, too. It was a real jungle in there, but even with four little boys dying to take a dive in the waterfall pool, I could pretend I'd traveled to the Amazon. They pretended with me. I'd forgotten how good that felt.

Outside, music filled the summer air. "What are they doing?" asked Donovan.

***"Art festivals allow
each of us to decide
what we think is
beautiful and stand
amazed at the choices
of others."***

"That's square dancing," I said. "It takes a lot of practice and skill."

He gave me what amounted to a "to each his own" look and I knew his horizons were still ripe for broadening. A little later we saw some cloggers and he asked me if that too was "art."

"Indeed," I said.

"Will I like it when I grow up?" he asked with seven years of skepticism built around a promised future appreciation for broccoli and beets.

"Well, maybe, maybe not," I said. "That's what art festivals are for. They allow each of us to decide what we think is beautiful and stand amazed at the choices of others."

"This being my first time out, I think maybe I'll just stand amazed," he said.

We rounded out the day by touching more art—when it was permissible, and limiting ourselves to looks—where it was necessary. I had a feeling some of those senses the potter had talked about were a bit more developed as the boys began to share opinions. Were they tired and cranky, or did they really disagree with the shading of red in that painting? Did Zachary really think batik was cool? How could they stand

so still while the artist explained print-making?

Before we left the festival site—hours later than we had intended—we visited the Youth Emporium. I admit it. I was skeptical. There were no G.I. Joes in there. Only original works of art by the same festival artists featured in the Plaza Artists booths and the Craft Colony. Here were paintings, sculpture, craft pieces and handmade toys, all priced from 50 cents to three dollars.

For \$1.50 we found a pottery piece nearly identical to the piece I'd panicked over earlier. For \$3 we picked up a nice painting, with a shade less red than the one we'd argued about in our sidewalk critique session. We also found some sculpture made of wood to put on the mantle with our vegetable people.

"I could do this good," said Russell, holding a picture up for me to see. "You think maybe I could be an artist someday?"

I told my wife when I got home that I'd been right all along. Taking children to an outdoor art festival makes perfect sense. "Art, to be truly understood, must be experienced through whatever senses are most keenly developed," I said. "Surely, dear, you realize that in ones so small..."

Thom Hunter is the father of five and a writer for Southwestern Bell in Oklahoma City. A former newspaper columnist, Hunter is the author of "Like Father, Like Sons (And Daughter, too)."



The 1990 Festival of the Arts will be April 24-29 in the plaza area west of the Myriad Gardens in downtown Oklahoma City. For more information, call the Oklahoma City Arts Council, (405) 236-1426.

ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

M A R C H ♦ A P R I L '90

♦ P R I M E T I M E S ♦

♦ **March 1** Cast off into the clear-running Illinois River for the Green Country Trout Derby. The Oklahoma Wildlife Department stocks the river year-round; if you catch a tagged rainbow trout at the derby, you also net some cash. ♦ **March 5-26** Photographer Lyle White proves the pioneering spirit is alive and well on the Plains with his images of people and landscapes at the Museum of the Great Plains in Lawton. ♦ **April 7-8** Get thyself to Norman to the Medieval Fair, where thou (and 70,000 others) can enjoy games, food, dance, theater and hearty fare reminiscent of the Middle Ages. It all takes place at the OU Brandt Park Duck Pond. ♦ **April 7-28** April blooms at Muskogee's Honor Heights Park at a perennial favorite: The Azalea Festival. In addition to the spectacular flowers, Muskogee celebrates spring with a parade, chili cook-off and crowning of Miss Chili Pepper.



MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

MARCH

- 1-21 James Drake, "The Border-La Frontera," OSU, Stillwater, (405) 744-9088
- 1-26 Allan Winkler, Paper Cutouts, Goddard Center, Ardmore, (405) 226-0909
- 1-31 Paul Laune Western Art Contest, Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum, Woodward, (405) 256-6136
- 1-April 1 Rucker Artwork Collection and Ceremonial Fan Exhibit, Cherokee Nat'l Museum, Tahlequah, (918) 456-6007
- 2-April 27 "Molas, Needle Art of Cuna Indian Women," Goddard Center, Ardmore, (405) 226-0909
- 3-April 1 Faculty and Graduate Student Centennial Exhibition, OU Museum of Art, Norman, (405) 325-3272
- 4-31 Three Valley Cover-Up Quilt Show, Three Valley Museum, Durant, (405) 920-1907

* Denotes a Homecoming '90 event.

- 4-April 29 "Fiberworks '90," West Gallery, Kirkpatrick Center, OKC, (405) 427-5461
- 5-26 "The Pioneer Spirit," Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, (405) 353-5675
- 8-April 26 "Eggshibition," Kirkpatrick Center, OKC, (405) 427-5461
- 10-April 27 "Fabric Painting/Figurative Sculpture," Firehouse Art Center, Norman, (405) 329-4523
- *11-April 9 Student Art Show, Five Civilized Tribes Museum, Muskogee, (918) 683-1701
- 25-April 18 "Dana Romeis and Cynthia Coulter Exhibit," Gardiner Art Gallery, OSU, Stillwater, (405) 744-9088

APRIL

- 1-30 "Ron Hewitt Exhibit," Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum, Woodward, (405) 256-6136
- *1-30 "Cross Timbers," Cherokee Strip Museum, Perry, (405) 336-4610
- 2-May 30 "Travel Photography of Japan," Kirkpatrick Center, OKC, (405) 424-4055
- 3-30 Cynthia Clay and Terree McMichael Exhibit, McMahon Auditorium Gallery, Lawton, (405) 248-8055

- 6-May 31 Individual Artists of OK Traveling Exhibit, Goddard Center, Ardmore, (405) 226-0909
- 7-May 6 Int'l Dinosaur Art Exhibit, OU Museum of Natural History, Norman, (405) 325-4711
- 14-May 4 76th Annual Art Students Exhibit, OU Museum of Art, Norman, (405) 325-3272
- 14-May 30 Porcelain Artists of OK, Kirkpatrick Center, OKC, (405) 427-5461
- 22-June 3 "Sculptures by Duane Hanson," Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, (918) 749-7941



MUSIC AND DANCE

MARCH

- 1 OSU Symphony Orchestra, Seretean Center, Stillwater, (405) 744-6133
- 2 Green Country Jazz Festival, NSU Music Dept., Tahlequah, (918) 456-5511
- 4 Prairie Dance Theatre: Navajo Tales, NSU Fine Arts Auditorium, Tahlequah, (918) 456-3533
- 8 SWOSU Show Choir, Southwest Playhouse, Clinton, (405) 323-4683
- 8 Ballet Oklahoma, Southeastern OSU campus, Durant, (405) 924-0121
- 10 Delphin and Romain, Pianists, Chopin Society of Mid-America, CSU Mitchell Hall, Edmond, (405) 341-4422
- 15 OK Sinfonia Big Band, Goddard Center, Ardmore, (405) 226-0909
- 17 Barbershop Show, Community Center, Bartlesville, (918) 333-2141
- 18 Dukes of Dixieland, Performing Arts Center, Chapman Music Hall, Tulsa, (918) 596-7111
- 22 "The Lettermen," NSU, Tahlequah, (918) 456-5511
- *23-25 "Madame Butterfly," Cimarron Circuit Opera Co., Sooner Theatre, Norman, (405) 364-8962
- 30-31 "Spring Gala," Western OK Ballet Theatre, SWOSU Fine Arts Center, Weatherford, (405) 323-5954
- 30-31 "Spring Gala," SWOSU Fine Arts Center, Weatherford, (405) 323-5954
- *30-April 1 "The Mikado," Cimarron Circuit Opera Company, Sooner Theatre, Norman, (405) 364-8962

APRIL

- 1 Ballet Folklorico Nacional de Mexico, NSU Fine Arts Auditorium, Tahlequah, (918) 456-5511
- 1 "Rustavi," Russian Folk Dance Ensemble, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa, (918) 596-7111
- 3 OSU President's Masterworks Concert, Seretean Center Concert Hall, Stillwater, (405) 744-6133
- 20 "Money in Both Pockets," Celtic Series, Williams Theatre, Tulsa, (918) 596-7111
- 20-21 SNU Concert Choral "Pops Weekend," Bethany, (405) 491-6345
- 20-22 "Les Biches," "Gaité Parisienne," "Pas de Dix," Tulsa Ballet Theatre, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa, (918) 585-2573
- *21 "Everything Gershwin," NSU Fine Arts Auditorium, Tahlequah, (918) 456-5511
- 21 Lawton Philharmonic Orchestra Concert, McMahon Auditorium, Lawton, (405) 248-2001

- 22 Bach B-Minor Mass, Canterbury Choral Society, Civic Center, OKC, (405) 842-7464
- 26 Latvian Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, Goddard Center, Ardmore, (405) 226-0909
- 28 Bartlesville Civic Ballet Gala Performance, Community Center, Bartlesville, (918) 336-4746
- 30 "Snow White," Cimarron Circuit Opera Co., Montgomery Auditorium, SEOSU, Durant, (405) 924-0121



RODEO AND HORSE EVENTS

MARCH

- 1-3 Timed Event Championship of the Year, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, (405) 282-3004
- 3 Sac and Fox Benefit Powwow, Stroud, (918) 968-2365
- 12-17 Gold and Silver Cutting Stakes, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, (405) 282-3004

APRIL

- 4-7 Lazy E Reining Classic, Guthrie, (405) 282-3004
- 12-14 Lazy E Spring Barrel Futurity, Guthrie, (405) 282-3004
- *17-21 OK Centennial Horse Show, State Fair Arena, OKC, (405) 272-9471
- 19-21 '89ers Day PRCA Rodeo, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, (405) 282-3004
- 20-21 All Pro BBQ Rodeo, Grady County Fairgrounds, Chickasha, (405) 222-3111



DRAMA

MARCH

- 1-3 "Brigadoon," Southwest Playhouse, Clinton, (405) 323-4448
- 1-3 "The Mouse Trap," Woodward Arts Theatre, Woodward, (405) 256-7120
- 1-3, 8-10 "Voices," OKCCC Theatre, OKC, (405) 682-7590
- 1-4, 8-11 "Anything Goes," Cameron Univ. Theatre, Lawton, (405) 581-2478
- 2-4 "Cats," Civic Center Music Hall, OKC, (405) 236-2333
- 3-4 "Vinegar Tom," Lawton Community Theater, Lawton, (405) 355-1600
- 16-24 "The Boys Next Door," American Theatre Co., Williams Theatre, Tulsa, (918) 596-7111
- 16-April 14 "Cabaret," Carpenter Square Theatre, OKC, (405) 232-6500
- 21 "West Side Story," Chapman Music Hall, Tulsa, (918) 596-7111
- *22 "Wind in the Willows," Oklahoma Kids, Seretean Center, Stillwater, (405) 744-6094
- 23-April 1 "Murder at the Vicarage," Lawton Community Theatre, Lawton, (405) 355-1600

30-April 1 "Peter Pan," Civic Center Music Hall, OKC, (405) 236-2333

APRIL

- 3 "Famous People Players," Woodward Arts Theatre, Woodward, (405) 256-7120
- 19-21 "Moose Murders," Goddard Center, Ardmore, (405) 223-1327
- 19-21 "Thief of Fire," OCU Theatre, OKC, (405) 521-5227
- 19-21, 26-28 "The Diviners," OKCCC, OKC, (405) 682-7558
- 20-22, 27-28 "To Kill A Mockingbird," Southwest Playhouse, Clinton, (405) 323-4448
- 22 "Dinosaur Rock," Williams Theatre, Tulsa, (918) 596-7111
- 26-28, May 3-5 "I'm Not Rappaport," Shawnee Little Theatre, Shawnee, (405) 275-2805
- 27-May 12 "Frankie and Johnny in the Claire DeLune," Carpenter Square Theatre, OKC, (405) 232-6500



FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

MARCH

- *7-8 Muskogee Regional Science and Engineering Fair, Civic Center, Muskogee, (918) 682-2401
- 17 Spring Fling Arts and Crafts Show, Altus, (405) 482-0210
- 20-25 Indian Art Festival, Expo Square, Tulsa, (918) 838-3875

APRIL

- *6-7 Taylorsville Arts and Crafts and Music Festival, Taylorsville, (405) 372-5573
- 7-8 Medieval Fair, OU Brandt Park Duck Pond, Norman, (405) 321-7227
- *7-28 Muskogee Annual Azalea Festival, (918) 682-2401
- 14 "Oklahoma Invention Fair," Kirkpatrick Center, OKC, (405) 424-5545
- *21 Azalea Chili and Bar-B-Que Cook-off/Dance/Miss Chili Pepper Contest, Muskogee, (918) 683-6611
- *21 Cimarron Territory Celebration and Cow Chip Throw, Beaver, (405) 625-4726
- 21-22 Storytelling Festival, Lawton Community Theater, Lawton, (405) 355-1600
- 24-29 Festival of the Arts, OKC, (405) 236-1426
- 27-28 Rooster Days, Broken Arrow, (918) 251-1518
- *27-28 Run for the Arts and Jazz Festival, Payne County Courthouse Lawn, Stillwater, (405) 377-7228



SPECIAL EVENTS

MARCH

- 1 Green Country Trout Derby, MarVal Trout Camp, Gore, (918) 489-2295
- *1-April 30 The Image and The Word: The Exploration and Settlement of the American West, Tahlequah Public Library, Tahlequah, (918) 456-2581
- 2-4 OKC Home and Garden Expo, State Fairgrounds,

OKC, (405) 843-1508

- 2-4 Backwoods Hunting and Fishing Expo, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 737-8070
- 2-15 Historic Lodge Tours, Woolaroc, Bartlesville, (918) 336-0307
- *9-11 Shrine Circus, Civic Assembly Center, Muskogee, (918) 682-2761
- 10-11 8th Annual C.A.R.S. Unlimited Car Show, Civic Center, Elk City, (405) 225-3401
- 10-11 Country Flea Market, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 354-1664
- 14-18 Sesame Street, Myriad, OKC, (405) 236-2333
- *16-17 Western Heritage Weekend, Nat'l Cowboy Hall of Fame, OKC, (405) 478-2250
- 22-25 Shrine Circus, State Fair Arena, OKC, (405) 947-3311
- *23-25 The Made In Oklahoma Consumer Products Expo '90, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (918) 747-5464
- 24 Hear 'O Little Dixie Doll-Toy Miniature Show and Sale, Bryan County Fairgrounds, Durant, (405) 924-2347
- 24-25 Ceramic Show, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 235-5080
- 25-31 Symposium on the American Indian, NSU, Tahlequah, (918) 456-5511
- 30 - April 1 Indian Trade Market, Roman Nose State Park, Watonga, (405) 521-2464

APRIL

- 4-8 Celebration of the Founding of the Fort, Fort Washita, Durant, (405) 924-6502
- 12-14 Oklahoma Farm Show, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 848-2805
- 13 50-year Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion, Wichita Mts. Wildlife Refuge, Cache, (405) 429-3222
- *15 Easter Sunrise Service, Rainbow Amphitheater, Muskogee, (918) 582-8360
- *18-20 Renaissance '90, NSU, Tahlequah, (918) 456-551
- *19-21 Old Settler's Reunion, Hammon, (405) 497-2424
- *20-22 '89er Day Celebration, Norman, (405) 321-7260
- 21 '89er Day Celebration, Guthrie, (405) 282-1947
- *21 First Bank Antique Fly In-Drive In, Tahlequah, (918) 456-0501
- 21 "Heart of the Osage," 5K Run and Chili Cookoff, Pawhuska, (918) 287-1208
- *25-26 The Thunderbirds, Bacone College, Muskogee, (918) 683-4581
- 27 "Hats off to Oklahoma," Storytelling by Pat Nelson, Frederick, (405) 335-5910
- *27-29 Ft. Reno and Indian Territory Days, Ft. Reno, El Reno, (405) 262-1188
- 28 OK Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Nat'l Cowboy Hall of Fame, OKC, (405) 478-2250
- *28 Dust Bowl Days Homecoming Celebration, Cordell, (405) 832-3538
- *28 NSU Illinois River Canoe and Spring Festival, NSU, Tahlequah, (918) 456-5511
- *28 Oklahoma River Heritage Festival, Illinois River, Tahlequah, (918) 456-3251

Although the information in this calendar is current, dates and details can change without notice. Please check in advance before attending any event.

